M I S S I O N T O M A R S

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. LATE AFTERNOON SKY. 1

Blue sky, a few puffs of cloud, pierced by slanting rays of sunlight. Late afternoon on a perfect day.

SUPER TITLE: "HOUSTON, TEXAS. JULY 4, 2020."

As we hear, after a few more beats, an ASTRONAUT'S VOICE.

PHIL
T minus ten, nine, eight, start ignition sequence, five, four, three, two, one, ignition... Liftoff!

A tiny red streak zips into the sky, then bursts with a faint, ludicrous POP. A bottle rocket. We hear CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER, excited SHOUTS.

2 EXT. LAWN PARTY. LUKE GRAHAM'S HOUSE. LATE AFTERNOON. 2

DESCENDING, we see PHIL OHLMYER, late 20's, kneeling, with a gaggle of eager CHILDREN around him. Phil, an astronaut, has got an impressive array of fireworks lined up, and is using an empty longneck as his launching tube.

CHILDREN
(all at once)
My turn! My turn! No, I was next! No, me! Uncle Phil, Uncle Phil, can I do one? I want to do one!

PHIL
Guys, guys, please! This is risky stuff here. And I'm a highly trained professional.

Derisive GROANS from the kids, more SHOUTS. Phil grins. There's little danger NASA will ever use him on a recruiting poster: he's messy, very hyper. Phil waves his hands for silence.

PHIL
Okay, okay! Uncle Phil will launch another booster...

Another astronaut, RENEE COTE, a tall, very fit French woman, is walking by with a fresh six-pack. She tosses a beer and Phil catches it.

PHIL
...just as soon as he completes his fuel intake.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

ANGLE FOLLOWS COTE,

Who grins, walking away from Phil and the kids, as we begin to get a better sense of the scope of this party. We are in the big back yard of a middle-class home in a Houston suburb. DOZENS OF PEOPLE - astronauts, NASA personnel, and their families - are gathered around picnic tables or spread-out blankets. Lots of red, white and blue bunting, lots of balloons. We hear snatches of MUSIC, mostly country-flavored, from dueling boomboxes. Futuristic Frisbees are being tossed about. A banner, strung between trees, reads "BON VOYAGE, MARS ONE!!!"

WILLIS
It'll take us six months just to get to Mars. Another year on the surface, then six months back. That's two <u>years</u>...

Passing the banner, Cote lobs a beer to another astronaut, NICHOLAS WILLIS, who snags it neatly. He's got his other arm around the waist of a PRETTY GIRL. As Cote moves OUT OF FRAME, ANGLE LINGERS on these two. Willis, a very young astronaut, early 20s, <u>is</u> recruiting poster material, and knows it all too well.

WILLIS
I guess what I'm trying to say is, since this is my last night on Earth, it's gonna be a very precious memory to me. Y'know?

PRETTY GIRL
Nice try, Nick.

As the Pretty Girl slips out of his grasp, laughing, and walks away, Willis shrugs philosophically. He pops open his beer, swigs it.

ANGLE FOLLOWS THE PRETTY GIRL

As she swerves around an open-pit barbecue, where other ASTRONAUTS are gathered. Cote has paused here, too, distributing the last of her beers. SERGEI KIROV, a Russian cosmonaut, is watching some kids nearby as they play a game of wiffle ball. He turns, grinning beerily at the chef.

KIROV
Hey, Woody, our Mars One crew won't be heading back to Earth till ten days after you guys land at our base camp with Mars Two. That's a pretty good long rendezvous.

WOODY BLAKE, late 30s, is a big, rangy guy in a cowboy hat over a Hawaiian shirt and a "KISS THE CHEF" apron. An entire pig is turning on a spit over the flames, and Woody is basting this as he smiles at Malik.

WOODY
What are you suggesting, Sergei?

KIROV
Maybe you should bring a baseball bat. Yes? American baseball? Our two crews could have ourselves a little Solar System Series.

WOODY
Please. Half you guys are foreigners. We'd crush you.

KIROV
No, no, we have equal crews. Three men, one woman. Same handicap.

He grins teasingly at Cote, who makes a face at him.

WOODY
Easy now, you're talking about my wife.
(seeing her approach)
And Terri just happens to be one helluva shortstop.

DR. TERRI FISHER, early 30s, passes by with a platter of corn-on-the-cob. Short, sturdy body, a face made attractive by its alert, questing intelligence. She pauses to kiss Woody's cheek; there's a wonderful, sexy spark between them. Then she glances at Kirov, all business now.

TERRI
Fast pitch, no steals, batter calls his own strikes. Thousand bucks make it interesting?

He's a bit rattled by her cockiness, and looks at Cote, who smiles, nods her cool agreement.

COTE
Eh bien. Winner take all.

TERRI
Good.
(smiles sweetly at Kirov)
Bring some balls.

The other men ooooh at this, busting on Kirov and Cote, as Terri moves on. Woody, watching her go, has a thousand-watt grin.

WOODY
You wanna know the sad part? Technically I outrank her. But if we want any peace at all on Mars Two, I'm gonna be saying a lot of "Yes, dears."

The others laugh.

ANGLE FOLLOWS TERRI as she dodges a PACK OF KIDS - they run by her, shrieking happily - before she finally reaches a picnic table, where ASTRONAUTS' WIVES are opening containers of baked beans, coleslaw, and potato salad.

1ST WIFE
...just not sure how I feel about NASA allowing couples to go on this type of mission together.

One of the other women raises a warning eyebrow, and the 1st Wife turns, sees Terri setting down her platter.

1ST WIFE
(embarrassed)
Nothing personal, Terri. It's just that, well, it's kind of a funny feeling for those of us staying behind.

TERRI
(carefully neutral)
All the research shows that marriage will provide stability on these long duration trips.

2ND WIFE
Then they haven't studied some of the couples I've known.

Laughter at this. Terri smiles politely - she doesn't really have much in common with these women - before moving on. ANGLE LINGERS on the wives, who watch her go with a slight tinge of jealousy. One of them is looking around.

3RD WIFE
Anybody seen Jim McConnell?

4TH WIFE
I don't think he's coming.

1ST WIFE
God, that poor man. How's he doing?

2ND WIFE
Totally losing it, from what I hear. Can't sleep, can't eat. Visits her grave almost every day.
(lowers her voice)
They say he could lose mission status.

3RD WIFE
Oh, that's so sad. That is just so tragic. You go to a routine physical one day, and wham.

4TH WIFE
After all those years of training, too. It was their whole dream.

1ST WIFE
Must be a pretty funny feeling for Luke Graham. Y'know? Now he's gonna be in the history books. First man on Mars...

She shakes her head, awed by the thought. The others nod in agreement, following her glance...

In the distance, a lone MALE FIGURE stands by the garage, his back to them, facing the parked cars, vans, and SUVs which stretch down the driveway and along the street. Another figure, a WOMAN, can be seen approaching him.

CLOSER ANGLE FOLLOWS the moving woman - DEBRA GRAHAM, early 30s, very attractive - until she reaches her husband. LUKE GRAHAM, mid 30s, has the lean, fit body of an astronaut, the restless intellect of a scientist. He's unaware of her approach until she touches his shoulder. He looks at her with an apologetic smile.

DEBRA
He's not coming, Luke.

LUKE
Jim deserves this, too. All his friends are here. And it's my last night.

DEBRA
(gently)
Your last night with us, too.

He looks at her, moved. She summons a smile. He slides his arms around her waist, kisses her forehead.

LUKE
I love you, Deb.

DEBRA
I love you too, baby. But maybe you should spend some time with Bobby.

LUKE
Yeah. I will. Where is he?

DEBRA
Up in his fort.

He kisses her again, then goes. Debra's eyes follow him, with a mixture of pride and sadness.

ANGLE FOLLOWS Luke away from the garage, into

3 EXT. THE BACK YARD. LATE AFTERNOON. 3

Luke moves through the crowd. Phil and the kids are still shooting off rockets. Red streaks arc high overhead.

In the back corner of the yard, where it's quieter, he passes Willis, who's sitting on a blanket, murmuring soulfully to PRETTY GIRL #2.

WILLIS
Deep space is so lonesome. So cold. But I guess I'll have my memories to keep me warm...

Luke shakes his head. Willis is incorrigible. Finally he reaches a tall redwood playset. He looks up the ladder.

A SMALL BOY sits on the platform of the tower, arms around his knees, staring up at the stars. A telescope rests nearby on a tripod. He looks lonely.

Luke climbs up, sits down on the wooden deck next to him. BOBBY, 7, glances over at his dad, his idol, then back at the sky.

BOBBY
Who's gonna read to me now, at bedtime?

Luke is surprised by the question. A pause.

LUKE
Mommy will.

BOBBY
I like when you do it. Now we're never gonna finish our book.

His voice is unexpectedly fierce. He's fighting back tears. Luke is moved. Another brief silence.

LUKE
Well, I'll tell you what. I've been thinking about that. And what I thought was - how 'bout if I bring along my own copy?
(Bobby looks at him)
Then every night, wherever I am, I'll read a little bit more of it. And I'll know that you and Mommy, wherever you are, you're reading it too. That way, it'll feel like we're still reading it together. 'Cause I don't know about you, but I'm pretty anxious to find out how 'ol Ben Gunn got marooned on that island. What d'you say?

Bobby manages a smile. He nods, feeling a little better. Luke is proud of his son's courage.

LUKE
Good deal. Can I have a hug?

Bobby's arms go around his father's neck. He hugs Luke fiercely, and Luke hugs him back. His eyes, over the thin young shoulders, are brimming with love and impending absence. Then, from the distance, the sound of an APPROACHING CAR. They both turn.

An open Jeep is coming down the street. Its DRIVER is alone.

Luke's expression changes. Recognition, then happiness.

4 EXT. LUKE'S STREET. LATE AFTERNOON. 4

The Jeep stops, its electric engine WHIRRING down. The Driver climbs out wearily, reaching into the back seat, and comes out with a champagne bottle, hastily decorated with ribbon. The PARTY SOUNDS are drifting this way, and he hesitates a moment, seeming to gather himself. He starts gamely towards the party, then pauses again.

Debra Graham stands nearby on the front lawn, waiting. She smiles tentatively.

JIM MCCONNELL, early 40s, manages a smile in return. He has dark circles under his eyes, and his clothes look slept in.

4 CONTINUED: 4

Yet we sense, even through his sadness, a kind of quiet competence in this man, an unforced authority; he's a natural leader.

Debra hurries forward, into his arms, and he hugs her. They separate, looking at each other. Her eyes are shining.

DEBRA
We were afraid you wouldn't come.

MCCONNELL
I caught a whiff of your barbecue. After that I was helpless.

DEBRA
All the way out in Galveston?

MCCONNELL
Something like that.
(She smiles)
It's his night, Deb. I didn't want to spoil it.

DEBRA
Spoil it? He's been going crazy looking for you.

Over her shoulder he sees Luke approaching, his arm around Bobby. The two men look at each other, the bond between them so strong it needs no words. Finally Luke smiles.

LUKE
C'mon. A whole lot of folks here are gonna be mighty glad to see you.

McConnell comes towards him, accompanied by Debra, and together the four of them move OUT OF FRAME, heading towards the party. ANGLE HOLDS on the parking area, as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

5 EXT. SAME VIEW. NIGHT (HOURS LATER). 5

All the parked cars and vans are gone now, except for two: McConnell's Jeep and Woody's classic 'Vette. Willis, one of the last to go, is just departing on his motorcycle. Perched behind him, arms around his waist, is PRETTY GIRL #3. They zoom away, through the darkened neighborhood.

6 EXT. BACK YARD. NIGHT. 6

The yard is nearly deserted. The "Bon Voyage" banner has torn loose at one end and flutters limply. Here and there a napkin blows across the ground.

(CONTINUED)

In the distance, THREE FIGURES sit on the ground, by the waning fire of the barbecue pit, sipping beers.

CLOSER ON THIS TRIO

As Woody shoves another piece of wood into the flames. For a moment he, McConnell, and Luke are silent, staring at the sparks as they rise towards the stars - red and gold dots mingling with the silver ones.

WOODY
(abruptly)
I wish we were all going. Together.

The intensity in his voice surprises the others, and even Woody himself. Luke glances at McConnell. An awkward beat.

LUKE
Then you've got a short memory. Think back to how we were by the second week of lunar training.

WOODY
Oh, you're not gonna bring that up again -

LUKE
(laughing)
I'm trying to remember, let's see, which one of us scored the lowest ranking up there?

WOODY
You just can't let that go -

LUKE
Oh, man, three commanders, on the same ship? If they sent us off to Mars together, there wouldn't be enough fuel to lift all those egos.

WOODY
(laughs)
Bullshit, we would've made a great crew.

MCCONNELL
That was never gonna happen. I was always teamed with Maggie, and we were mostly chalkboard jockies. You know? Systems. Payloads...

LUKE
Listen to him. Mr. Cover-of-Time Magazine!

WOODY
Yeah, who landed the crippled Block II Shuttle?

LUKE
Yeah, and who scored highest on the lunar rankings?

WOODY
Let it go, Luke.

MCCONNELL
(smiles)
Sure, I made a little noise. But putting the first footprints on Mars? Nah. That's for guys who...
(looks at Luke)
...wrote their Ph.D. thesis on how to colonize the place. And guys who...
(looks at Woody)
...read too much science fiction as a kid and still wear little Flash Gordon rocketships around their necks.

He grabs playfully at Woody's neck. Woody smacks his hand away, laughing.

WOODY
You read the same damn science fiction books that I did! You're just not man enough to wear jewelry!

He pulls from his shirt a little Flash Gordon rocketship emblem hanging on a chain, and waggles this tauntingly at McConnell, as Luke and McConnell laugh.

WOODY
You want Flash. You know you want him. Well you'll have to come through me!

Luke grabs Woody's arm to give McConnell a better shot at the emblem, but Woody cuffs his hands away, laughing. McConnell, watching their horseplay, shakes his head.

MCCONNELL
God, she would've loved to see you two clowns. Just one more time.

He tries to smile, but his face reddens. Then all at once his chest is heaving as he struggles to control his emotions. Woody sees this, reaches out a reassuring hand, but McConnell shakes him off, rises abruptly. He turns his back on them, walking away a few steps.

Woody and Luke exchange a worried glance.

7 EXT. LUKE'S STREET. LATER THAT NIGHT. 7

McConnell and Luke watch as Woody starts up his Corvette. McConnell has regained his composure.

LUKE
Hey, Woodrow, isn't it about time you donated this thing to a museum?

Woody revs the engine, which ROARS lustily. He grins.

WOODY
Internal combustion, boys. Accept no substitutes.

Luke laughs. Woody looks at McConnell.

WOODY
Jim, if there's ever... if there's anything Terri and I can do -

MCCONNELL
I'm okay. Really. Thanks.

Woody reaches out to shake Luke's hand.

WOODY
See you when I get to Mars, Luke. Don't solve all the mysteries of the universe, okay? Leave a little something for the next guys.

LUKE
I'll see what I can do. Just make sure you bring some fresh beer.

WOODY
You got it.

With a final glance at McConnell, Woody slips the car into gear. McConnell and Luke watch as he drives away. A silence. Luke glances at his old friend, growing more serious. We sense he's been waiting all night for a chance to say this.

LUKE
Should've been your mission, Jim. Yours and Maggie's.

McConnell, looking after Woody's car, becomes very still.

LUKE
None of us ever wanted Mars the way you two did. Not even Woody. Twelve years of hoping for this assignment, training for it -

MCCONNELL
That's all over now.

LUKE
If Maggie hadn't gotten sick - if you hadn't pulled yourself out of the rotation to take care of her -

McConnell turns to him, his eyes flashing danger. He will not tolerate pity. Luke sees this but presses on.

LUKE
No, I'm gonna say this. I have to say it...
(pause)
I wanted Mars One. Hell, I battled you for it every step of the way. Never wanted to beat anybody so bad in my life. But not like this... Jim, I'd give this all up in a second, if it would bring Maggie back to us.

McConnell is deeply moved, and for a moment doesn't trust his own voice.

MCCONNELL
I know that, Luke. You don't have to say it... Mars is yours now. Go get it.

LUKE
(pause)
Take care of yourself.

MCCONNELL
Yeah. You too.

Luke nods. They grab hands for a second, then let go. Luke walks back towards his house. McConnell watches him for a moment, then turns, walks over to his Jeep. He opens his door, then pauses. He turns. Looks up at --

8 EXT. NIGHT SKY. 8

A tiny reddish dot hovers there, glowing steadily. Mars itself, a tantalizing prize. But for him now, more distant than ever. For him, perhaps, never to be attained.

9 CLOSE ON MCCONNELL'S FACE 9

As we see these thoughts going through him. After a moment he looks down at

HIS SHOES

And the sandy verge of the front yard.

MCCONNELL'S EYES

Are a map of complex emotions: regret, injured pride, infinite yearning. Gently, a bit self-consciously, HE LIFTS ONE SHOE

And sets it down again, making a careful, deliberate footprint in the sandy soil...

10 OMITTED 10

11 EXT. MARS. CHRYSE PLANITIA. DAY. 11

Instantly we're hurled into an immense, stunning LANDSCAPE, mysterious and vivid as a fever dream. Dazzling sunlight. A vast plain of rust-orange soil. Countless craters. Boulders the size of houses, tossed about by the hands of gods. Twin moons hanging in a salmon-pink sky. On the horizon, towering, craggy peaks. And, at center - the only sign of life - a small, mysterious, moving puff of dust.

12 thru 17 OMITTED 12 thru 17

18 EXT. MARS. DAY. 18

CLOSER ANGLE as a small, Sojourner-like, multi-wheeled robotic vehicle ambles INTO FRAME, jouncing along the orange Martian soil, pausing to snuffle its sensors towards the occasionally interesting rock. Lettering on its side reads "ARES-8."

SUPER TITLE: "MARS. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. EIGHT MONTHS LATER."

Suddenly Ares-8 pauses. Its video lens WHIRRS out, fine-tuning focus, as it becomes intrigued by something OFFSCREEN - a higher, more distant target. The little fellow almost quivers with excitement.

19 EXT. MARS. TIU VALLIS. DAY. 19

A one-man ATV ROVER waits in the background, in a dry streambed, as Luke, in an EVA spacesuit, swings a clawed rock hammer against a multi-layered, sedimentary rock face. Reddish dust coats his bulky white suit. Despite that bulk, he moves easily in the light Martian gravity(1/3 Earth's). A hunk of rock breaks off, and Luke examines it more closely, holding it up to his clear faceplate. He's very happy, absorbed in this work, when his RADIO CRACKLES.

COTE
Luke, you read me?

LUKE
Yeah, Renee.

COTE
Luke, I just got ARES-8 on line and... Well, we think you're gonna wanna see this for yourself.

Luke, though reluctant to break off work, is intrigued.

LUKE
Copy that.

As Luke turns away, headed for the rover

WE PULL WIDE

To REVEAL a STAGGERING PROSPECT, seen for the first time: Valles Marineris, that planet-creasing slash. So wide, so deep, it boggles the mind: on earth it would reach from New York to L.A.

20 OMITTED 20

21 INT. MARS ONE HAB. DAY. 21

The crew of Mars One - Kirov, Willis, and Cote - have joined Luke, gathered around some display monitors. They're in NASA jumpsuits; the Hab has artificial atmosphere, enhanced gravity, and heat. All are captivated by what they see.
ON A VIDEO SCREEN

We see a low-angle image of an elongated, rubble and dirt-covered MOUNTAIN. Hard to tell scale, but it looks huge. What's most striking, however, is a WHITE PEAK barely protruding through the rubble two-thirds of the way along the mountain's ridgeline. Its whiteness is in clear contrast to the typical rust-orange of the surrounding rubble; what's more, this strange little peak also displays an oddly-smooth, multi-planed symmetry.

LUKE
What the hell is that?

COTE
No idea, boss.

LUKE
Where is it?

Cote glances at the others. They're all smirking, as if they share some secret joke Luke's not yet in on.

WILLIS
You don't wanna know.

LUKE
C'mon, what's so funny? Gimme the coordinates.

He leans over to read a digital gauge, but Cote covers it with her hand, enjoying the tease.

COTE
Latitude 41 degrees north, longitude 9 degrees west.

LUKE
The Plains of Cydonia. So?
(pause)
Oh no. You're not telling me -

They all laugh as the other shoe drops. Luke's expression is incredulous, exasperated.

(CONTINUED)

COTE
Oui. Exactement! It's Kirov's fault, he picked today's sector.

KIROV
Hey, c'mon! We've got a scientific duty to check that thing out.

Luke sits, taking over the Ares remote control from Cote. They all watch as he fine tunes the image, trying without success to coax more resolution.

LUKE
Great. That's great. The first anomaly we hit, and it's gotta be in the one place guaranteed to make NASA look ridiculous... You know how many books have been written about that damned mountain?

COTE
The Egyptians put it there.

KIROV
No, the Amazons.

WILLIS
No, it was little green men!

LUKE
And all because a couple of lousy impact craters happen to look like eye sockets. If this gets out, we'll have every UFO kook on Earth spouting off on the six o'clock news... C'mon, people, gimme a read here. Is that a cinder cone?

KIROV
Nah, too smooth. Too angular. Volcanic upwelling?

COTE
No fissures. No caldera.

LUKE
It's an upwelling, for sure. But maybe not volcanic...

The others look at him, puzzled. Luke leans in closer, with growing excitement. He points to the screen.

21 CONTINUED: (2) 21

LUKE
Look at the color. And see how shiny it is? I could swear that's ice...

COTE
This far south?

WILLIS
Impossible. You can't have ice at this latitude. Not unless...

They look at each other, Luke's excitement now leaping from one to another of them. They're almost trembling.

WILLIS
Oh my God.

LUKE
How far away is it?

KIROV
Sixteen kilometers northeast. Take us twenty minutes to get there.

LUKE
(considers a moment)
Let's send a packet to Micker. Then we'll go check it out.

22 EXT. MARS ONE BASE CAMP. DAY. 22

AIRLOCK DOORS

Slide back, REVEALING the crew in EVA suits, carrying gear. They walk over to...

THE FOUR-MAN ROVER

The astronauts climb in through the hatch. The last one in pulls it shut behind him and locks the latches. We see Cote and Luke check their screens and press some buttons. Luke puts the rover in drive.

WIDER ANGLE, PULLING UP AND AWAY

As the rover moves off across the rocky surface, dust kicking up from the wheels, we get our first exterior glimpse of the Mars One Base Camp. The main HAB UNIT looks like a huge tuna can with a conical top section; it connects to a separate, inflated-bubble GREENHOUSE. There's also an OXYGEN STILL, PROPELLANT PLANT, and, on the other side, a couple hundred meters distant, the massive ERV (Earth Return Vehicle), which arrived as a separate, unmanned flight.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 22

Rows of SOLAR PANELS, arrayed on the ground, and an AMERICAN FLAG on a thin pole, about man-height, complete the scene.

DISSOLVE TO:

23 EXT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (ISP). EARTH ORBIT. DAY. 23

A vast, impressive, MULTI-SECTIONED SPACECRAFT is drifting majestically above Earth. The main hull displays both NASA and U.N. flag decals.

SUPER TITLE: "INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION. MARS MISSION CONTROL ROOM (MMCR). 20 MINUTE TIME LAG."

We MOVE IN towards another of the station's segments, which is dedicated entirely (as we see from more labels and insignias) to the Mars Program: Control Room, Training and Living Quarters, and a Vehicle Docking and Launch Area, where Mars Two is already positioned for its eventual flight. We hear LUKE'S EXCITED VOICE, over speakers.

LUKE
This is a truly anomalous formation. Looks like nothing we've seen so far. The structure appears to be crystalline, at least from the angle displayed by ARES-8...

24 INT. MMCR. DAY. 24

On a large CENTER DISPLAY SCREEN, we see Luke and the Mars One crew, sitting around their kitchen table in the Hab, finishing lunch while taping this VIDEO MESSAGE.

LUKE
(grins)
We're all trying not to go too nuts up here, but - we think there's a good chance this could be an extrusion from some subsurface, geothermal column of water. And if we're right...

He looks at his crew. They beam like cats who ate canaries.

LUKE
...then we've found the key to permanent human colonization.

IN THE MMCR

There's an EXCITED BUZZ among the assembled TECHNICIANS, FLIGHT ENGINEERS, and SCIENTISTS. This would be a fantastic, epochal discovery.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

MCCONNELL

Sits at the center console, wearing a headset. He's now the Mars One CAPCOM (Capsule Communicator), and his manner is brisk, efficient, all-business. A TECHNICIAN leans in for instructions.

MCCONNELL
Tell geology and hydrology we need to scramble on this. Full-court press.

The technician nods, hurries away. McConnell, sharing the intense excitement of those around him, stares up at

THE SCREEN

Where Luke and his crew are still smiling, well knowing the excitement their bombshell will create.

LUKE
Anyway, we're going out to take a closer look at it, try to get an idea of its composition.
(checks his watch)
By the time you receive this, we should be just about on-site.

25 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 25

The rover is a hundred meters away and moving fast TOWARDS CAMERA. We BOOM DOWN to REVEAL Ares-8, still faithfully holding its point, like an Irish Setter, with its video snout WHIRRING OUT.

The rover drives up and slows to a stop nearby. The hatch door cracks open and some dust vents out. The door opens all the way and the astronauts climb out. They all look up in awe. We hear their voices ON RADIOS.

KIROV
Jesus Christ...

26 THE MYSTERIOUS PEAK 26

Gleams in the sun, dazzling white, its facets as planed and smooth as if an architect had drawn them. It pierces through the topmost rubble at the near end of the big mountain - an isolated, butte-like giant, stretching two miles from left to right in front of them.

27 THE ASTRONAUTS 27

Walk towards the mountain. There's a very deep, very low, staccato tone intruding over their headsets.

LUKE
Anyone else hear that?

COTE
Yeah. What is it?

WILLIS
Sounds like our antenna's out of phase.

LUKE
Can you fix it?

WILLIS
Hey, skip, I can fix anything.

LUKE
Big talker. Renee, Sergei, let's break out the radar, see what this thing's made of.

As they go to their jobs, the deep, barely audible rumbling tone continues.

28 INT. SPACE STATION. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MMCR. DAY. 28

MULTINATIONAL CREWMEMBERS walk by, in the artificial gravity of the busy station, as RAY BECK, mid-50s, approaches from the opposite direction. Beck is the tough, crewcut, PR-savvy head of the NASA Mars Program (ID'd by his name tag), and just now he's leading a covey of U.N. AMBASSADORS on a tour. The ambassadors, of both sexes, many nations, and all races, look as excited as schoolkids.

BECK
...and this is the Mars Mission Control Room, nicknamed "Micker." I understand a comm packet is incoming from Mars One Base Camp, so you may find this interesting.

He opens the doors, ushering his flock inside.

29 INT. MMCR. DAY. 29

The ambassadors enter, oohing and ahhing over the impressive array of gadgetry and personnel, and especially over the big screen. Some of them start taking souvenir snaphots. The NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR turns to Beck, whispering curiously.

(CONTINUED)

AMBASSADOR
That man over there. He's in charge?

Beck follows his glance to

MCCONNELL

Who is surrounded by a KNOT OF TECHNICIANS, to whom he is giving quiet, precise instructions. They hover, then depart, like so many eager bees.
BECK

Smiles indulgently at the ambassador's misunderstanding.

BECK
No, actually, that's Jim McConnell, the CAPCOM. Our voice link to the astronauts? Jim's been with the manned Mars program since its inception. One of our real pioneers.

AMBASSADOR
Will he be going to Mars, too?

BECK
Ah, no. This is as close as he gets.

ON THE SCREEN

Luke and his crew have finished eating, and are clearing away their dishes and leftovers.

LUKE
... anyway, that's about it. We'll send another packet when we get back.

Cote clears her throat, gives Luke a look. The others can barely conceal their grins.

LUKE
Oh, right. One more thing. Today is a very special day for a good friend of ours, and I know he's there right now.

McConnell looks at the screen, worried. What's Luke up to?

LUKE
Now, he hates it when any fuss is made, so I won't mention his name...

A look of relief comes over McConnell.

LUKE
...because the last thing in the world I'd ever want to do is embarrass someone like Jim McConnell.

McConnell winces - Dear God, no - as, on the screen, Kirov appears from OFF CAMERA holding a cupcake with a burning candle stuck in it, and the Mars One crew starts SINGING "Happy Birthday" to him. Loudly. And very off-key.

LUKE
C'mon, you Micker weasels, sing!

Soon most everyone in MMCR is singing along - even some of the jolly ambassadors - with the noticeable exception of Beck, who stiffens unhappily. McConnell is mortified.

LUKE
(sings a line, then, to CAMERA:)
Hey, Ray! Take a look at him! Is he all red with one of those fake "I'm-a-good-sport" grins?

Beck looks over at McConnell, who indeed is red in the face with a fake "I'm-a-good-sport" grin.

LUKE
And hey, you guys, check out Ray! Does he have on one of his "This-wasn't-in-my-mission-plan" faces?

Indeed, Beck's smile is thin, sour, disapproving.

LUKE
Nothing you can do about it, Ray! We're a hundred million miles away!

Luke and the crew finish singing the song. Luke raises the cupcake in a toast.

LUKE
Happy Birthday, Jimbo! Make a wish!

He and his crew lean in, blow out the candle. They laugh and applaud, then wave goodbye.

LUKE
Catch you again soon. Take care, buddy. End of transmission.

Luke reaches out, turns OFF the CAMERA, and the display screen GOES BLACK.

29 CONTINUED: (3) 29

Beck turns, his gaze locking with McConnell's. He's annoyed, as if this violation of protocol were somehow McConnell's fault. McConnell returns his stare coolly.

30 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 30

Cote stands by a display screen mounted on the rover. Kirov has a big radar gun on a tripod, pointing at the mountain. Luke turns to Cote.

LUKE
Well? What's under there?

COTE
(puzzled)
Je ne sais pas. I...I think there's something wrong with the equipment.

LUKE
What?

COTE
I mean, it can't be right. It says... it says there's metal under there.

Luke doesn't understand. He walks up to look at the display screen.

COTE
(points)
There's ten, twelve meters of rubble and sand, and then... solid metal.

LUKE
That doesn't make any sense. You're reading a vein of ore.

COTE
(shakes her head)
No. It's under the whole mountain.

The deep pulsing tone continues. Luke frowns.

LUKE
Nick, could the problem with the antenna be interfering?

WILLIS
Could be.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

LUKE
(to Cote and Kirov)
Try it closer and up the power. I'll watch the screen.

31 INT. MMCR. DAY. 31

McConnell is taping an audio message to be sent to Mars as the rest of MMCR looks on. Beck is gone. So are the U.N. ambassadors.

MCCONNELL
Ah, we're all pretty stoked about that formation you spotted, Mars One. The folks in the geology and hydrology back rooms are going over your images and comparing them to every photomap they've got.

32 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 32

Cote and Kirov are close to the foot of the mountain, re-setting the radar gun on its tripod. The deep vibrating tone continues.

Luke is some distance away, by the rover. He looks at Willis, who's still working on the rover's antenna.

LUKE
Nick, how we coming on that antenna?

WILLIS
Goin' as fast as I can, boss.

Cote and Kirov are having some trouble with the switches on the radar gun. They turn towards Luke and Willis.

KIROV
Hey, Nick. Come show me how stupid I am. I can't get this to work.

Willis looks at Luke. Luke nods - Go help them. Willis starts towards the radar gun.

33 INT. MMCR. DAY. 33

McConnell is handed a slip of paper, glances at it.

MCCONNELL
Medical wants me to remind you that you're three days late on your blood tests.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
I know they're a bore, but you've got to get them done, or else... or else I don't know what. Just do them, okay?

34 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 34

Willis, Cote, and Kirov get the radar gun up and running.

KIROV
All set here, chief.

Luke sidles over to the display screen on the rover.

LUKE
Okay. Crank up the juice and let's see what's in this sucker.

35 INT. MMCR. DAY. 35

McConnell checks over his clipboard list of updates.

MCCONNELL
I think that's about it for business. But on a personal note, be advised that, ah, none of you can sing worth a damn.

LAUGHTER in the MMCR.

36 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 36

Luke watches the screen on the rover, as, by the mound...

KIROV

Flips a switch on the radar gun, then swivels its muzzle slowly across the near slope of the mountain. We hear and feel the radar signal. The immediate result is that the pulsing tone we've been hearing suddenly stops.

LUKE

Looks up from the display screen. A puzzled expression.

LUKE
Why did that stop?

A split-second later, he gets his answer. We hear a WHOOSH, a mighty rushing of wind, as

37 A GIGANTIC, TRANSLUCENT CYLINDER 37

Starts to swirl and rise, straight up from the top of the mountain, at its center. As it swirls, the cylinder picks up debris - pebbles, sand - from the sediment-encrusted surface of the slopes.

38 THE FOUR ASTRONAUTS 38

Stare up at this spectacle, awed. A cyclone? Some kind of energy wave? They have no idea. At the moment they're too fascinated to even be scared.

39 TILTING UP - FROM THEIR POV - 39

We see the whirling cylinder rise, higher and higher, perfectly straight, until in just moments it's as tall as a skyscraper. As it rises, it gains speed and power, narrowing at its top into a conical vortex. It's sucking up so much dirt, so many rocks - even small boulders now -that the accumulating debris begins to darken its swirling, translucent outer "skin".

40 THE ASTRONAUTS 40

Exchange amazed glances. Can't believe their eyes...

41 INT. MMCR. DAY. 41

McConnell still hovers by the microphone.

MCCONNELL
Honestly, Luke, if you guys don't have anything better to do with your time, I can make some suggestions to mission medical. There are worse things than blood tests.

LAUGHTER and GROANS from the staff in MMCR.

42 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 42

Luke, still staring in fascination, becomes aware of sand and pebbles flashing past his helmet. From behind. He turns.

SAND PATTERS AGAINST HIS FACEPLATE

As the nearby landscape BLURS. The vacuuming effect is becoming more general across the area. More violent.

LUKE IS ALARMED

And the spell is broken. He keys his throat mike, his lips moving, but no sound can be heard over the ROARING WIND. He waves his arms, motioning for the others to back away, towards the rover. Wind whips at their EVA suits as they obey him, retreating.

Luke, backing away himself, is afraid to take his eyes off the cylinder.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

Then he sees that one man - Willis - hasn't moved. In fact he's busily snapping photographs of the cylinder. Luke hurries over to him, tugs his sleeve.

WILLIS LOWERS HIS CAMERA,

But still stares up, transfixed, like a man face to face with a cobra. Luke follows the young astronaut's frightened gaze, and his own eyes widen as he sees

43 THE TOP OF THE VORTEX 43

Beginning to tilt down, then coil sideways. Suddenly they're looking into the huge open "mouth" of it, as sand and rocks fly into the swirling darkness...

The monstrous, gaping maw slithers down over the rim of the mountain, turning this way, then that. Seeking them. And then, with horrifying precision, it locks in on the little group of astronauts. And lunges towards them...

44 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 44

Luke and Willis turn, running as hard as they can towards the rover. But the suction is so great, it's as if they're held back by wires.

The ground itself is SHAKING, RUMBLING, as earthquakes begin to open fissures across the plain. The ROAR of the vortex, the GROANING of the earth, are like an onrushing freight train...

AHEAD OF THEM

In the maelstrom of flying debris, they can barely make out Cote and Kirov, still retreating, leaning back with all their strength against the suction, while staring up, aghast.

Suddenly a hurtling rock, the size of a basketball, smashes into Cote's helmet from behind, crushing it and killing her instantly. Blood sprays into the wind, immediately crystallizing, in the sub-zero atmosphere, into red pellets...

LUKE, HORRIFIED, FLINGS HIS ARM UP

As bloody hail patters against his faceplate and forearm. An instant later he sees

45 KIROV 45

Snatched up by the wind, then swept past him, in a terrifying blur, arms and legs flailing, mouth open in a silent scream as he vanishes...

46 THE GROUND AT LUKE'S FEET 46

Abruptly opens, and he slides into a fissure. Scrabbling frantically with his gloved hands, he manages to momentarily arrest his fall, gripping the edge of the fault line, with his helmet and one elbow thrust over its lip. The air is almost solidly choked with debris, deadly boulders bound over him, and torrents of cascading sand are burying him alive...

CLOSE ON LUKE,

Barely conscious, as he watches, for a horrifying final instant, as...

47 HIS LAST CREWMAN, WILLIS 47

Is sucked bodily into the black maw of the vortex, spinning and tumbling like a rag doll...

48 CLOSE ON WILLIS'S FACE 48

His features grotesquely distorted by the forces tearing at him, before suddenly his faceplate is sprayed with blood, and...

49 DISTANT ANGLE - LUKE'S POV - 49

Willis's spacesuit explodes, his entire body disintegrating into a million bits, which instantly disappear into the hellish maelstrom. And then that maelstrom itself, just as abruptly...

STOPS. Vanishes.

There is an instant, ringing SILENCE, as awesome in its own way as the roaring storm itself had been...

50 WIDE ANGLE 50

On the plain, as the last pebbles, released from suction, pitter down, bouncing. Swirls of dust and sand drift away, settling gently. The harsh orange landscape is once again calm, peaceful.

And then, from the direction of the nearby mountain, we hear another sound: the deep bass pulsing rumble returns.

51 INT. MMCR. DAY. 51

As McConnell finishes his message to Luke.

(CONTINUED)

MCCONNELL
Oh, and I talked to Debra. She and Bobby are doing fine. Said to tell you, they're, ah, they're on their "third time through the book, page -
(glances at a note)
- page 125." They send their love and say take care of yourself. Same from us here, buddy. Till next time, then. End of transmission.

52 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 52

MOVING ANGLE, the CAMERA EXPLORING ground zero, as the bass, pulsing rumble continues...

WE PASS the Rover, canted sideways into a little crater, with its canopy missing, one axle fractured, but miraculously still with all four wheels...

WE PASS faithful little ARES-8, lying on its side, partially crushed under a boulder. It gives a final, pitiful WHINE, its video snout slowly extending, then dies. And finally we come to the area where the fissure had been, and see

THE FISSURE HAS BEEN FILLED IN

Leaving only a slender crease of umber sand. No sign of Luke. The pulsing rumble continues, over, as we see

53 EXT. AERIAL VIEW. DAY. 53

An extraordinary sight, seen from high in the air, looking back down. Staring up at us from the bottom of a shallow crater, scoured clean of its aeons of accumulated silt and rubble, is a structure resembling a vast humanoid Face.

The surface is gleaming white, apparently metallic. The features are suggested by intricately interlocking planes, slopes, ramps. The "eyes" - hatches of some kind? - are closed, and the overall expression is eerily calm, but terrible in its power, like some ancient tribal mask.

We see the Face clearly for only a few beats before thick, scudding clouds OBSCURE it, but the deep, pulsing rumble continues, low and insistent...

DISSOLVE TO:

54 INT. MARS TWO (DOCKED). COCKPIT. DAY. 54

We're inside the Mars Two spacecraft, which is still in its docked position alongside the Space Station.

(CONTINUED)

Woody Blake, wearing a NASA jumpsuit, floats up into the cockpit in Zero-G, studying a thick manual.

WOODY
(reads)
"Problem: Hatch door malfunction, backup power fail, manual override fail.
Solution: Replace circuit breaker 907B."

He straps into the pilot's seat, staring at an electrical junction box at one end of the console.

WOODY
Okay... Piece of cake.

He swings open the housing, revealing a bewildering tangle of fuses and wires. He sighs heavily, as Terri drifts up beside him, also in a jumpsuit, and straps into the co-pilot's seat.

WOODY
God, who dreams up these nightmares?

TERRI
Don't try to change the subject.

WOODY
I'm not! We're talking about your sister's wedding, right?

TERRI
Very funny. We're talking about dancing lessons. Before my sister's wedding.

WOODY
Honey, do you mind? I've got a catastrophic power failure here.

He peers into the housing with exaggerated concern. But Terri's not so easily sidetracked.

TERRI
Woody, we're a married couple. Would it kill you to invite me out on the floor once in awhile?

WOODY
I danced with you at our wedding.

TERRI
I'm not talking about shuffling your feet around while you grab my butt. I mean real dancing. Cha-cha, rhumba, jitterbug -

WOODY
Face it, honey, some couples dance, some go to Mars. That's life.

TERRI
I'm serious. We've got two more months in this training rotation, but just as soon as we get home, we're starting lessons. If we never dance, people will think there's something wrong.

WOODY
If they see me dance, they'll know there's something wrong.

Reaching past him, she pulls out the required breaker. As he reacts, surprised, she smiles, despite her exasperation.

TERRI
You are such a lug.

Overhead, an intercom CRACKLES. We hear PHIL.

PHIL'S VOICE
Cockpit, this is Control.

TERRI
Control, this is Cockpit.

PHIL'S VOICE
Uh, Terri, they want us all back in the Station. Report to Micker.

TERRI
Who says report to Micker?

PHIL'S VOICE
The little men who live in my head.

WOODY
Phil, c'mon! We just started this drill.

PHIL
Woody, it was Ray Beck. He told me to round up the team. Now.

Woody and Terri exchange a worried look. What's wrong?

55 thru 57 OMITTED

55 thru 57

58 INT. SPACE STATION. MMCR. DAY. 58

A crisis atmosphere prevails. The big room is more crowded than we've ever seen it, with ENGINEERS and MANAGERS hurrying by, huddling in tense, conferring knots, or muttering feverishly into microphones.

On the center screen, a giant image of Mars. A frantic flow of green numbers crawls above and below this, and the site of the Mars One Base Camp is marked in blinking red.

WOODY AND HIS CREW

Are staring up at this screen, appalled. McConnell and Beck stand nearby, briefing them.

BECK
Then, at 1417, the X-band continuous data stream from Mars went silent. All data - med, environmental, everything - suddenly stopped. While we were trying to figure out what the hell went wrong, we got a signal from the folks at the Large Array at Soccoro.

MCCONNELL
At the same moment we lost the data stream, they picked up an intense burst of energy from Mars.

WOODY
What do you mean, "intense"?

MCCONNELL
(hesitates)
Catastrophic.

Looks are exchanged among the Mars Two crew.

TERRI
What about the crew?

BECK
The level of energy in the pulse... didn't seem survivable.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: 58

WOODY
What about the REMO? It went into Mars orbit last week. Maybe that could give us some clue.

MCCONNELL
Good thinking, Woody. That's just what we tried next.

He leans over, punches buttons on a keyboard.

ON THE CENTER SCREEN

An orange dot can be seen in its orbital ellipse around Mars, leaving a glowing electronic trail. This dot gets isolated in a viewing box, then enlarged and rotated into the computer-animated image of a small, ugly, industrial-looking unmanned cargo craft, labelled "REMO."

MCCONNELL
The Resupply Module checked out fine. No instrument failures, no change in status. Orbit holding steady. But there was something else. The REMO'S computer contained an uplink message -a very faint, highly distorted transmission from Mars One Base Camp.

TERRI
Someone's alive.

MCCONNELL
Yes.

PHIL
How?

BECK
The message is almost indecipherable. Two teams are still working on it. You better see for yourselves.

59 INT. MMCR. DAY. 59

FINGERS press buttons on a console. McConnell, Woody, Terri, and Phil are crowded around a monitor with Beck and two weary TECHNICIANS.

TECHNICIAN
Still concentrating on the audio. We managed to bring out a couple more words, but we've got a long way to go.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

WOODY
Show us whatever you've got.

The technician nods, then gestures to his assistant who hits a play button.

60 CLOSE ON A MONITOR 60

Black for a moment, then static. Out of this static comes a faint image of Luke, sitting alone at the Hab kitchen table. He looks awful - dried blood on his face, bloodshot eyes. The image is blurry, heavily streaked, and most of what he says is lost in waves of static.

LUKE
...make this quick... may be only ch-
(long section of static)
...to the site, when we... hit us just as we... -thers are all dead...

Woody, Terri and Phil look at each other - Oh, God.

LUKE
(following more static)
...low sound that we couldn't understand. Then all of a sudden there was this terrib...
(another long burst of static)
...-stems are holding up for now, but I don't know how long I can...

The monitor screen GOES BLACK.

61 INT. MMCR. DAY. 61

TECHNICIAN
That's it.

Woody and his crew stare at the screen, stunned. This is a catastrophe almost too huge to grasp.

62 INT. SPACE STATION. DAY. 62

As Beck leads McConnell and the other shaken astronauts down a corridor, Phil pauses, seeing...

A SOBBING TECHNICIAN

At her desk. TWO CO-WORKERS are trying to comfort her. One of these women looks up, and her reddened eyes meet...

PHIL'S EYES

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

He looks back at her, haunted.

TERRI
What did Luke mean by a "low sound?"

63 INT. SPACE STATION. DAY. 63

In an otherwise empty lounge, the astronauts clutch Styrofoam coffee cups. Beck stands nearby. Through a large viewport behind them, stars glitter against the inky blackness.

BECK
If this was a earthquake, as we're now assuming, there's usually an auditory component.

WOODY
But that energy pulse they picked up in New Mexico...

PHIL
Electromagnetic emission. Not uncommon with large-scale geophysical phenomena.

WOODY
(incredulous)
Causing this kind of damage? I don't buy it. We're missing something here.

McConnell and Woody exchange a glance...Woody's right.

TERRI
Luke must be in pretty bad shape if he hasn't blasted out of there in the Earth Return Vehicle. That thing's designed so even one crew member could fly it back to Earth.

MCCONNELL
Even if Luke was in great shape, he couldn't get home. That energy pulse would've fried the ERV'S computers.

WOODY
Other than the computers, how do we think the ERV fared?

63 CONTINUED:

BECK
Well, so far our modelling says it should be in pretty good shape.

WOODY
Which means it's gonna be up to us to get new motherboards, drives, and software to Mars. As fast as we can.

McConnell looks at him, nods. They're on the same wavelength. But Beck is more cautious.

BECK
Whoa, slow down. It's gonna take us weeks just to analyze this data.

MCCONNELL
Right, but meanwhile, we've gotta be working up a mission plan.

WOODY
Luke needs us now.

BECK
Luke may already be dead. And even if he's not, it's doubtful he's going to be able to transmit again. So we wouldn't know whether it's safe to land until you were almost there.

PHIL
What about SIMA?

Terri looks at Phil - SIMA?

PHIL
The Saturn Imaging Probe. It's going to slingshot around Mars on its way through the solar system. It could be retasked to take pictures, read radiation levels at Mars One Base Camp.

WOODY
Good idea Phil. If SIMA tells us Luke hasn't survived and it's not safe to land, we swing around Mars and come right back home.

MCCONNELL
Yes. We can design the mission to have a free return capability. It's a long trip, but if you don't land it's the best option.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (2)

BECK
We're getting ahead of ourselves. You're forgetting the bigger problem.
(They look at him)
The orbits are all wrong. Our first decent launch window is almost eight months from now.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (3)

MCCONNELL
But we can go earlier and get there faster if we reconfigure the payload for extra fuel. We've modelled that, Ray. I've modelled it.

BECK
On paper, yeah. But those stresses have never been tested in space.

MCCONNELL
The ship can take it.

BECK
I wasn't thinking of just the ship.

A tense beat. Again we sense the test of wills between these two tough-minded men, once good friends.

MCCONNELL
I know the protocols for a Mars Recovery Mission better than anybody, because I helped design them. And I'm saying these guys can do it.

WOODY
He's right, Ray. We've got a real shot.

A pause with beck weighing the odds. He looks at Woody.

BECK
Give me an updated mission plan by 0800 tomorrow. Then I'll put it in the works.

MCCONNELL
You'll have it by 0600.

He looks at Woody, Phil and Terri, who are just as eager.

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
Let's get to work.

McConnell exits followed by Terri and Phil, but as Beck starts out, too, Woody stops him.

63 CONTINUED: (4)

WOODY
Chief, could I have a word?

Beck looks at him a moment, nods.

64 OMITTED 64

65 INT. SPACE STATION. MMCR. DAY. 65

In a quiet corner, Woody and Beck are alone.

WOODY
I've no longer got the right crew.

BECK
(surprised)
What do you mean? Bjornstrom can be up here on the next shuttle.

WOODY
Bjornstrom is a geologist. He's good, but not for this. My people just lost eight months of training. This is a different mission, with a different objective.

BECK
I haven't been given authorization for a mission yet.

WOODY
But when you are, it ought to be given the best chance for success. I want McConnell to fly right seat.

Beck's expression hardens.

BECK
He's no longer on mission status.

WOODY
Yeah. Because you washed him out.

BECK
He washed himself out. He only had to pass a few more psych evaluations, but he refused to take them.

WOODY
Ray, he's the best pilot I ever saw, and you've got him benched at a desk.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

BECK
Everybody has to pass the psych prelims. No exceptions. Jim knew that.

WOODY
Maggie was his wife. He didn't want to lie on a couch and share her with strangers.

BECK
That was his call. But I had to make one too. It was tough as hell, but I'd do it again.

WOODY
His wife wasted away in front of his eyes. What was he supposed to do? Suck it up? Get with the program? What was his crime? That he was upset? That he cried...?

BECK
I couldn't trust him!

Beck and Woody stare at each other. A long tense beat.

65 CONTINUED: (2) 65

BECK (cont'd)
(his voice softer)
Not in a crisis... I'm sorry Woody, but Jim lost his edge. Are you gonna stand there and tell me Jim McConnell is the same man he was two years ago? You want me to bet four more lives on that?

This stops Woody, just for a beat. Then makes him press on harder, with even greater intensity.

WOODY
When Maggie died, yeah, it knocked the shit out of him. It knocked the hell out of all of us. But you know and I know that he's still the best we've got. He and Maggie wrote the book on Mars. He's got more hours in the sims than the rest of us put together. Ray, we can do this. Give me McConnell as co-pilot, and we will bring Luke home. And that's a promise.

Beck looks back at him, his features taunt.

66 INT. SPACE STATION. MMCR. DAY. 66

Woody, Terri, and Phil stand at the edge of the big control room, waiting and watching, in a tense silence, as

IN THE DISTANCE, FROM THEIR POV

Beck and McConnell are huddled together at the CAPCOM's console. Other personnel have moved away, giving them room. Both men are seated, leaning forward, with McConnell listening intently, while Beck does most of the talking, very quietly. After a moment McConnell looks up in surprise. His eyes search the room till they find

WOODY'S FACE

Woody looks back at him, nods: C'mon, man. Take it.

MCCONNELL'S OWN FACE

Is a study in conflicting emotions. But after a moment he masters his feelings, turns back toward Beck. A few more quiet words are exchanged, then Beck offers his hand. McConnell hesitates, then shakes it. Both men rise, and McConnell turns again to look towards

WOODY, TERRI, AND PHIL

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: 66

Who react with relief, glad that he's now a part of their crew. Woody grins, giving him a thumb's up.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: 66

CLOSE ON MCCONNELL'S FACE *

As he smiles. Then he starts towards them, with a new energy * in his step, a new sense of confidence and purpose. And as * he WALKS TOWARDS US, PASSING OUT OF FRAME... *

67 67 *
thru OMITTED thru *
69 69 *

DISSOLVE TO: *

70 EXT. DEEP SPACE. MARS RECOVERY. DAY. 70

An infinite canopy of stars. After a moment, some of them begin to be BLOTTED OUT as

A SPACESHIP

Glides INTO VIEW. "MARS RECOVERY" (formerly Mars Two) looks much like its sister craft on Mars: a conical cockpit mounted above a "tuna can" crew Hab module.

SUPER TITLE: "MARS RECOVERY. MISSION DAY 172."

The entire lower deck forms a segmented section of the hull that rotates on bearings to provide artificial gravity; we see window ports spinning past, then an American flag emblem.

Behind this lower deck, in an extending network of struts, like the abdomen of a dragonfly, are the three huge round PROPELLANT TANKS. Then vast, delicate-looking rectangular SOLAR PANELS, which sweep out to either side of the ship; these also bear the dish of the earth-pointing HI-GAIN ANTENNA. And finally comes the great mass of the ENGINE BELLS, housed within a curving AEROSHELL; three hatches in the aeroshell can open to allow the main thrusters to fire through for a mid-course burn.

CAMERA DRIFTS CLOSER

To the forward section of the ship, APPROACHING a viewport in the EVA airlock chamber. Inside, we can see Phil leaning forward, concentrating on some task...

71 OMITTED 71

72 INT. EVA AIRLOCK. DAY. 72

A BUNCH OF M&Ms

Are floating in mid-air, forming an intricate 3D pattern. In the EVA airlock, it's zero G.

Phil, strapped into a chair by a galley counter, is just completing this weightless puzzle by placing a final blue M&M. He looks bored, sluggish. In the b.g., Terri is hunched over a microscope.

McConnell emerges from the core tunnel, behind them, coming up from the lower Hab, then pushes off from the ladder, floating towards Phil. He grins, admiring Phil's obsessive handiwork.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: 72

MCCONNELL
What's that?

PHIL
That... is the exact chemical composition of my ideal woman.

MCCONNELL
Used to be.

He plucks out a couple of the M&Ms as he drifts by.

PHIL
Hey!

McConnell grins, snacking on the M&Ms.

MCCONNELL
Now what is it?

Phil looks sadly at his floating model.

PHIL
A frog.

McConnell and Terri laugh as Phil starts scarfing down the rest of the M&Ms. Swooping at them with both hands.

TERRI
I guess now we have our answer to the effects of long-term interplanetary travel on the human mind. The answer is Phil.

MCCONNELL
(smiles)
I'm gonna get an update on SIMA. It should be just about close enough to start capturing some surface images.

He's drifted to another short ladder, and now grabs it, starts up to the cockpit, atop the Hab.

73 INT. COCKPIT. DAY. 73

As McConnell appears in the cockpit, he sees Woody by the forward instrumentation panel, looking at a monitor. The cockpit is also zero G.

MCCONNELL
Hey, Skip.

73 CONTINUED: 73

WOODY
Take a look.

McConnell pulls himself forward.

74 ANGLE ON MONITOR 74

MARS completely fills the screen. Surface details are clearly visible. Something is moving down there, an amorphous brown swirl.

75 INT. COCKPIT. DAY. 75

WOODY
What do you make of that?

MCCONNELL
Dust storm. Southern hemisphere, coming from the east... Big fella, too.

WOODY
Headed for Chryse Planitia.

MCCONNELL
Yup. Could get a little hairy just about landing time...

McConnell pulls back from the screen, looks at Woody.

WOODY
We'll have to be ready to move fast. Maybe even advance our ETA. Those things can cover the whole planet, and last up to a year.

A beat. They both hope he's wrong.

MCCONNELL
When does SIMA do her fly-by?

WOODY
Tomorrow morning, about 0600. That's when we find out whether we came all this way for nothing.

They exchange a glance. Woody's right, but the thought is too terrible to dwell on. McConnell looks back at Mars.

MCCONNELL
(softly)
My money's on Luke.

76 INT. MARS RECOVERY. EVA AIRLOCK. NEXT MORNING. 76

CLOSE ON a DIGITAL CLOCK

Just turning over to read "0545."

TERRI

Pulls her gaze away from these numbers. Judging from her red-rimmed eyes, it's been a long, anxious night. Restlessly, looking to distract herself, she reaches for a test tube of blood, straps it into a centrifuge, sets it spinning. Nearby is her electron microscope.

77 MCCONNELL (LOWER HAB) 77

Lies on his cot in his own cubicle, with the door closed. The lower hab has artificial gravity (AG) and McConnell can move normally. Hands behind his head, he stares at his bureau.

A PHOTO OF A WOMAN

Rests there, in its leather travel frame. Beautiful, smiling, dark-haired: MAGGIE MCCONNELL. Her face glows with intelligence and energy.

MCCONNELL

Shifts his eyes. The clock on his bulkhead reads "0546."

78 PHIL (LOWER HAB) 78

Stands in the communal bathroom, still in his pajamas, a towel around his shoulders, brushing his teeth. He glances at another digital clock, which reads "0547." Shakes his head impatiently. He looks back into the mirror, then is surprised to hear MUSIC lilting incongruously over the loudspeakers: Elvis Presley's "Blue Moon."

79 thru 80 OMITTED 79 thru 80

81 INT. EVA AIRLOCK. DAY. 81

Phil floats in through the connecting tunnel, then stops himself at a handhold. He grins, charmed by the sight of

WOODY AND TERRI DANCING

Like a weightless Fred and Ginger. Woody is surprisingly good at this. Enthusiastic, unselfconscious.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

He sweeps Terri gallantly about the little cabin, pushing off from every handy surface, even guiding her into some passable twirls and dips. She laughs, shaking her head.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

PHIL
What brought this on?

WOODY
Zero-G. My last chance to be graceful. Once we're in Mars gravity, it's back to shuffling my feet and grabbing her butt.

TERRI
I'll take what I can get.

She grins, kisses his ear, as Phil turns, sees

MCCONNELL

Who has now arrived, is also watching the dancing couple. A twinge of sadness crosses his features. But when his eyes meet Phil's, he shakes off the feeling and manages a smile: Aren't they something?

Over the music, they hear a CHIRP from the SHIP'S COMPUTER, then an announcement.

COMPUTER
Attention. Incoming packet.

They all look at each other. This is it! Woody spins over to a console, shuts off the music.

MCCONNELL
It's SIMA.

82 INT. COCKPIT. DAY. MINUTES LATER. 82

The crew is gathered around a display screen. The lights are dim, reflecting up off their faces. By their expressions, we can tell the news is not good.

CLOSE ON THE SCREEN

It's a color, high-resolution satellite image of the Mars One Base Camp. Ghostly, dust-covered. No signs of life.

WOODY
Looks deserted.

PHIL
It's still standing, though. So is the ERV. And look, there's the greenhouse.

(CONTINUED)

MCCONNELL
We know Luke survived for at least a few hours. Question is, are there any signs of recent activity?

They all scan the screen. Phil spots something.

PHIL
There.

He grabs a stylus and touches the screen. They all look.
CLOSE ON THE SCREEN

Using where the stylus touches the screen as the focal point, the image enlarges. THREE LONGISH DIRT PILES appear, some fifty meters from the hab.

PHIL
What the hell are those?

McConnell gets it first.

MCCONNELL
Graves.

They all realize he's right. They sit back, stunned. But then Phil has another thought.

PHIL
Hold on. There's only three. That means -

TERRI
Phil -

PHIL
It means Luke must still be -

TERRI
No. It just means there was nobody left to bury him.

This quiets everyone for a long moment.

WOODY
Check the radiation levels.

Phil keys in some commands and data pops up onscreen.

PHIL
Normal.

WOODY
Go to the disaster site.

82 CONTINUED: (2) 82

Phil uses the stylus to bring MORE IMAGES into view. The frame moves over the terrain in the direction of the Face, first in SWIFT BLURS, then slowing. Scattered rock debris come into view. The IMAGE ARRIVES where the mountain was, and they see...

Debris in every direction, NEAT SPIRALS of it now, dropped uncannily into place, like some massive earth sculpture. As if - but this makes no sense - it had been swirled towards a LARGE CRATER. The crater itself is a perfect circle. They FOCUS on the CENTER OF THE CRATER, but the image gets distorted by STATIC.

MCCONNELL
What's wrong?

PHIL
I don't know. Magnetic interference?

Phil tweaks the stylus, but the image won't clear up.

WOODY
Go to infrared.

Phil works the keyboard.

THE SCREEN

Goes to INFRARED, reading heat, The middle of the IMAGE, where the Face is, is still distorted, refusing focus.

THE ASTRONAUTS

Sit back, exasperated.

PHIL
Must be a problem with SIMA. I don't see how an earthquake, six months ago, could give us this kind of distortion.

MCCONNELL
That was no quake.

He leans closer, staring intently.

WOODY
Then what the hell was it?

McConnell shakes his head. But his every sense is engaged; he's like a predator just sighting his prey for the first time. We see in his eyes an utter determination to unlock this secret.

83 EXT. SPACE. DAY. 83

Mars Recovery is speeding ever closer to Mars, which now looms large, a dusty red mysterious sphere.

84 INT. MARS RECOVERY. LOWER HAB. DAY. 84

McConnell and crew are eating dinner while they watch a taped message from MMCR.

85 CLOSE ON MONITOR SCREEN 85

As Ray Beck addresses them. Other NASA STAFFERS, twenty or more, have crowded in behind him, and we sense their great hopefulness and high spirits; the whole team's triumph is tantalizingly close now.

BECK
We're going to continue analyzing this data and try to determine what the problem is with those images. Frankly, we're just as stumped as you guys, but we'll keep on it.
(glancing around)
We agree that the evidence of the graves is inconclusive and that a ground search is advisable. Be aware there are little sand storms kicking up near Mars One Base, but the big one you spotted is turning south. It shouldn't be a factor.

Beck takes a breath, smiles.

BECK (cont'd)
We're all pretty excited here and we're sure you must be feeling the same. Enjoy your meal and get a good night's sleep. We anticipate that tomorrow morning you will be Go for Mars Orbital Insertion.

86 INT. MARS RECOVERY. LOWER HAB. DAY. 86

WHOOPS OF JOY from McConnell's crew. Woody and Terri high five each other.

BECK
God bless you and goodnight. End of transmission.

The monitor screen GOES BLACK.

87 INT. MARS RECOVERY. LOWER HAB. NIGHT. 87

The lighting is subdued for a sleep period, but everyone's too restless. There's a low HUM of equipment.

88 INT. EVA AIRLOCK. NIGHT. 88

Terri and Phil are playing computer Monopoly under a single light. Terri is using touch-screen technology to move her piece. She glances at Phil. He has spread some M&Ms out, letting them drift in mid-air as he performs his ritual weeding out of the red ones. She shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: 88

TERRI
What if you opened up your meal packs and found that, instead of putting in everything but red ones, they'd made a mistake and put in only red ones?

PHIL
Hey, that's a funny notion. And what if in your meal packs, instead of brown rice, there were spring-loaded spikes that shot into your eyes?

TERRI
(pause)
How did you ever pass the psych evaluation?

PHIL
When you're schizophrenic, they take the higher score.

He touches the screen to roll the dice.

89 INT. MARS RECOVERY. LOWER HAB. NIGHT. 89

McConnell, in his cubicle, looks away from the photo of Maggie. Haunted by memories. He rises, flips through the CDs in a storage case, pulls one out. He holds this carefully, hesitating, then feeds it into his computer. Immediately his screen saver vanishes and we see

A90 A HOME VIDEO OF A PARTY A90

An impromptu celebration, a bunch of friends gathered in a semi-darkened living room. The footage is HANDHELD, a bit jerky. People have paper plates of food, beers in hand, everyone is a little tipsy. Debra is there, Terri, Phil, Cote, Kirov, others. They're watching a STILL PHOTO SEQUENCE, shown on a large screen TV, with commentary by Luke and Woody.

THE FIRST PHOTO

Is of a small boy (YOUNG MCCONNELL) in his pajamas, kneeling in front of a Christmas tree. He's grinning ecstatically as he holds up a brand new model rocket.

LUKE
Jim's first ship was seriously underpowered...

LAUGHTER at this. Some AD LIB CRACKS about the painfully bad haircut and the pajamas.

(CONTINUED)

THE SECOND PHOTO

Is of a gawky-looking teenage girl (YOUNG MAGGIE), standing on a porch at night, posing a bit self-consciously by a telescope on its tripod.

WOODY
Maggie was always starstruck...

More LAUGHTER, plus some digs about the nerdy eyeglasses and braces. VIDEOCAMERA swings around the room, REVEALING the adult JIM and MAGGIE. They sit side by side on the hearth, leaning into each other, looking very happy.

MAGGIE
I'll get you guys for this.

More LAUGHTER. Everyone's having a great time. The VIDEOCAMERA swings back towards the TV screen as

A THIRD PHOTO APPEARS

Jim and Maggie, young adults, standing on the wing of a fighter jet. Both in Air Force flight suits, helmets in hand. Suntanned, cocky, flashing radiant smiles.

LUKE
When they met at the Air Force Academy, it was "love at first flight."

GROANS and LAUGHTER from the offscreen watchers.

WOODY
After that, NASA training was tough. All Jim could think about was exploring a heavenly body.

More ribald LAUGHTER, as

A FOURTH PHOTO APPEARS

Maggie and Jim, tethered together, floating weightlessly in space suits.

LUKE
But Maggie, as you can see, kept him on a short leash. Until...

A FIFTH PHOTO

Shows McConnell, in a dress uniform, leaning in to kiss Maggie, who wears a white bridal gown.

WOODY
Mission accomplished!

B90 ANGLE ON MCCONNELL, IN THE PRESENT B90

As he smiles at this, hearing the renewed LAUGHTER and CHEERS, the AD-LIBBED DIGS from the video. He becomes aware he's not alone. He looks up.

WOODY

Stands in the doorway of his cubicle. Their eyes meet. They both smile, turning back to the video. Remembering.

C90 IN THE VIDEO C90

Luke and Woody have stepped forward, INTO SHOT, standing at the sides of the TV, where the last photo lingers. Luke waves his hands, hushing everybody.

LUKE
Today we celebrate a new chapter in their story. And guys, it's a pretty historic one.

Both men raise champagne flutes.

WOODY
Let's hear it for the newly-announced Captain and Co-Captain of Mars One. To Jim and Maggie!

CHEERS at this, repeats of "Jim and Maggie!" Luke grins, giving a little signal, and we see

A FINAL PHOTO

Of Maggie in Jim's arms, both of them in goofy tropical vacation wear, smiling. Evidently a photo taken in the surf somewhere, but here it's been crudely superimposed onto a Martian landscape. Laughter greets this unlikely image.

LUKE
When you guys land, it'll prove once and for all there's no intelligent life on Mars.

More hoots of LAUGHTER, CATCALLS, but Maggie jumps in to protest, as the VIDEOCAMERA SWINGS TO HER AND JIM. Terri sits nearby.

MAGGIE
Hey, c'mon, what if I'm right?

91 CONTINUED: C90

ASSORTED VOICES
Oh no, here we go! Don't get her started! Somebody put on some music!

MAGGIE
It's our sister planet!

PHIL
Oh brother!

LAUGHTER at this, and Maggie joins in. She's a good sport.

TERRI
Maggie, why does this have to be about us? Mars is a great opportunity for pure science.

MAGGIE
We'll do the science. And we'll do it very well. That's what we've trained for. But what if there's more...? In all our myths, in every human culture, Mars has always held a special attraction. What if that means something? Only we don't understand it yet...

The mood of the party is changing, as everyone is caught up in Maggie's spell. She has a radiant simplicity. The VIDEO CAMERA DRIFTS IN ON HER; we are caught up, too.

MAGGIE
The universe is not chaos. It's connection. Life reaches out for life...

She looks at McConnell, smiles. He takes her hand.

MAGGIE
This is what we were born for, isn't it? To stand on a new world, and look beyond it to the next one. It's who we are.

A silence; the guests are enchanted by the purity of her passion. She smiles, suddenly self-conscious. She hadn't meant to get so carried away.

90 IN THE PRESENT - MCCONNELL 90

Reaches out, gently taps the keyboard, FREEZING the screen. He and Woody, their eyes shining, stare at her image. A beat.

WOODY
You okay?

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: 90

MCCONNELL
Yeah. I'm good to go.

Woody glances at him. It's true. Rather than being saddened, McConnell seems to have taken on new strength. A renewed sense of wonder.

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
After all these years... Can you believe it? Tomorrow we'll be standing on Mars.

Woody nods, smiles.

WOODY
You know what? She may have been right.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: (2) 91

McConnell looks at him.

WOODY
If that wasn't a quake down there, then something else caused it. Or planned it... You're thinking the same thing.

MCCONNELL
It's never been out of my mind.

WOODY
Jesus. You realize what this means?

McConnell nods. Looks again at Maggie's face on the screen.

MCCONNELL
She knew, Woody. She was the only one of us that ever thought there might be something down there.

WOODY
Yeah, and we're not leaving until we find out... Deal?

McConnell nods. They clasp hands briefly. Deal. Then Woody turns. Before leaving, he hesitates just a moment, turning back. One last thought, and he doesn't know he's going to say it until it comes out.

WOODY
Maggie was the best of us.

McConnell looks at him, silent but grateful. Woody goes. McConnell turns back, looking at her smiling face, frozen on the screen.

91 INT. COCKPIT. NIGHT. 91

MARS LOOMS AHEAD OF US,

As seen through the cockpit windows. Huge, beautiful, MUCH CLOSER now. We can make out swirling pink clouds, large surface features. It's just before Martian dawn, the next morning.

MCCONNELL
Range 6783 and closing. 35 minutes till Mars Orbital Capture.

WOODY
Okay, people let's look sharp. If we overshoot, there's no coming back.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: 91

PHIL (O.S.)
Yeah, and drifting through eternity will ruin your whole day.

In the cockpit, Woody and McConnell are in the pilot and co-pilot's wearing space suits but not yet helmets. AS CAMERA PULLS BACK AND AWAY, we see them making instrument adjustments in preparation for MOI.

TERRI (O.S.)
Delta V systems initialized.

WOODY
Charge primary APU.

TERRI (O.S.)
Engaged. Charged.

WOODY
Select HPU fuel cells for run.

TERRI (O.S.)
Engaged.

MCCONNELL
Tie main bus to systems.

PHIL (O.S.)
Power ready.

MCCONNELL
Select H2/O2 HPU and fuel cells for open.

PHIL (O.S.)
H2/O2 control valves open.

CAMERA TURNS, PUSHING DOWN INTO...

92 INT. EVA AIRLOCK. NIGHT. 92

...Where Phil and Terri sit side by side at a pair of computers, relaying cockpit commands to the systems.

WOODY (O.S.)
Charge flow.

TERRI
Charged and on-line

WOODY (O.S.)
Reset PW.

TERRI
Set

MCCONNELL
Transfer protocol data from EVA station.

PHIL
Transferred. Awaiting track confirmation.

There's a sudden LOUD, BRITTLE POP from somewhere overhead, and Phil's gloved hand, hovering over a computer screen, is punctured through and through. The screen itself is holed and spiderwebbed with a loud CRACK!

PHIL
Uhhh!

PHIL HOLDS UP HIS HAND

As he and Terri stare at it, dumbfounded. Thick droplets of blood leak out and begin to swirl away, sucked up towards the venting puncture in the hull over head. The astronauts' helmets dangle up there, awaiting use.

TERRI
What in God's -

Suddenly we hear HIGH PITCHED ALARMS SOUNDING, then the PINGING OF MORE TINY MISSILES, slashing across the ship's outer skin.

WOODY AND MCCONNELL

Are staring back from the cockpit, reacting in astonishment to Phil's drifting blood and to the alarms. Then Woody suddenly understands.

WOODY
Micrometeoroids

MCCONNELL
(scanning sensors)
Breach hits in the hull!

ANGLES ON TERRI AND PHIL

As she seizes his wounded hand, tries to stop the bleeding. He's staring at a gauge.

PHIL
Outgassing! Losing pressure!

TERRI
Woody, seal the breech!

ANGLE ON WOODY

As he unbuckles, dives from the cockpit back down into the EVA, and floats quickly over to a storage hatch. He yanks this open pulling out a

92 CONTINUED: (2)

PATCH GUN

Then spins around in zero-G, as his eyes track

THE RISING DROPLETS OF BLOOD

Which give a telltale hint of the puncture's location, somewhere up among the dangling helmets on the "ceiling."

WOODY PUSHES OFF,

Rising to this area, and shoves aside a helmet with a shattered faceplate - its label reads "MCCONNELL" - to REVEAL A BREECH IN THE HULL. Jagged metal edges, dangling insulation. The blood droplets are whirling out through here, going into the vacuum of space.

Quickly Woody stuffs the muzzle of the patch gun into the puncture, firing a thick grey sealant. We hear MORE PINGS, ECHOING LOUDLY, but after a few seconds they DIMINISH, then abruptly STOP. The KLAXONS continue to wail.

WOODY
Kill those alarms!

McConnell punches buttons, MUTING THE ALARMS, and they all strain to listen, faces tense and sweating. A long beat. But the meteor shower has passed by, as abruptly as it appeared. The astronauts turn, becoming aware of a strange phenomenon.

PHIL'S BLOOD DROPLETS

Have stopped in place, wobbling eerily as perfect spheres in the zero-G. Then suddenly they start moving again, faster and faster, in a new direction. Down through the open core tunnel that leads to the lower Hab.

MCCONNELL

Stares at a gauge that confirms what's happening.

MCCONNELL
Still outgassing in the lower Hab! There must be another hole down there, even bigger.

PHIL
Losing pressure fast! We're gonna decompress!

WOODY
Computer, how long until zero atmosphere?

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: (3) 92

COMPUTER
(after a beat)
Four minutes, nine seconds.

PHIL
If we get below 20% atmosphere, the power will shut down!

TERRI
Are you sure?

PHIL
Positive! A vacuum inside the ship would cause a total electrical failure. The nav computers will fry!

MCCONNELL
(to Woody)
We'll lose all control. We won't be able to fire the engines to capture Mars orbit.

Just then a computer screen flickers, freezes. Phil punches keys with his good hand. What he sees shocks him.

PHIL
It's already starting. The primary L-1 hub has been smashed. The systems are crashing.

Woody looks back at his crew, struggling to project more calm than he really feels.

WOODY
Everybody switch to suit oxygen. We beat this in the simulator, we can do it here. Jim, you've got the ship. I'm going EVA.

They stare at him, stunned by their immense task.

WOODY (cont'd)
C'mon, people, let's go! Let's work the problem!

93 INT. EVA AIRLOCK. MOMENTS LATER. 93

Terri, now helmeted, is putting Woody's helmet on him, but something's in the way, chafing his neck. He reaches into his suit, pulls out...

THE CHAIN

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: 93

From around his neck, with his little Flash Gordon rocketship dangling.

WOODY HANDS THIS TO TERRI

As they share a brief, loving glance, but there's no time for words. She tightens his helmet ring, and he brushes his gloved fingertips on her faceplate. Then he hurries towards the inner hatch door, where McConnell is throwing airlock switches. Woody and McConnell exchange a look.

At the EVA computer panel, Phil is shutting down non-essential power drains, trying to get the main computer system back on line. His wounded hand makes this difficult and painful.

PHIL
Jesus, it's still bleeding.

TERRI
Keep the pressure on!

COMPUTER
Eighty percent atmosphere...

94 INT./EXT. AIRLOCK. NIGHT. 94

The outer airlock door is now open, revealing stars, as Woody drifts through it into space. He's now wearing the MMU, an oversized jet pack like the ones used by the shuttle astronauts.

95 INT. EVA ROOM. NIGHT 95

MCCONNELL'S HELMET,

With its shattered faceplate - now useless - drifts past Terri as she is wrapping med tape around gauze pads on Phil's glove.

MCCONNELL

Floats up to them, checking on Phil's work at the computer.

TERRI
Jim, you've gotta get your spare helmet from storage.

95 CONTINUED:

MCCONNELL
No time. Phil, can you keep the nav computers on-line?

PHIL
I can't get this damn machine to re-initialize! And the automated systems just went down. We can't shut down the hab rotation from here.

MCCONNELL
I'll do it from below.

TERRI
We're losing pressure. You could embolize.

COMPUTER
Seventy percent atmosphere...

McConnell looks at her, knows she's right. But he starts off anyway. Phil reaches out his good hand.

PHIL
Jim, I've got an idea. If you guys can save enough atmosphere, I'll disconnect the power in the main computer bay, then jump start the systems. I'll do a hard boot.

This is a radical, incredibly risky notion. McConnell stares hard at Phil. So does Terri.

MCCONNELL
Has that ever been tested?

PHIL
Are you kidding? These machines are much too valuable.

McConnell looks from Terri to Phil. It's life and death.

MCCONNELL
Do it.

Then he turns, and the CAMERA FOLLOWS MCCONNELL as he pushes away from the console and dives down into the core tunnel, heading towards the

96 thru 101 OMITTED

96 thru 101

A102 INT. LOWER HAB. A102

....where he emerges from the core into the rotating Hab deck, and pushes himself down a ladder toward the floor. He accelerates as he gets closer to the floor, then rights himself with a twist and lands on his feet - now in gravity.

102 EXT. MARS RECOVERY. NIGHT. 102

Woody, in the MMU, is hovering over the lower segment of the Hab hull, and right away we see his problem. He can't reach the damaged spot because it's spinning past him, spewing vapor.

WOODY
(over radio)
Jim, how we doin' on the AG?

103 INT. LOWER HAB. NIGHT. 103

McConnell runs to a computer terminal and starts clicking with the mouse.

MCCONNELL
Just one goddamn second. Come on, c'mon...

COMPUTER
Voice print identification.

MCCONNELL
McConnell!

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: 103

COMPUTER
(a beat)
Accepted. Shutting down artificial gravitational rotation.

McConnell hears a sound up at the core tunnel. He turns, it's Terri. She holds an small O-2 cannister, marked with a red cross.

MCCONNELL
Hang on!

McConnell grabs onto a counter edge as...

104 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT. 104

Attitude control thrusters on the hull begin firing in pulses. The rotation of the lower Hab deck immediately starts to slow down. The great red ball of Mars drifts by.

105 INT. CORE TUNNEL. NIGHT. 105 *

Terri, lurching, grabs a ladder strut, and watches from the tunnel as...

106 MCCONNELL (LOWER HAB) 106

Is also jarred by the firing of the thrusters. The rotation slows until the Hab is still. Zero-G. McConnell floats. He and Terri can hear the terrifying sound of air whistling out into space through the breach hole.

COMPUTER
Sixty per cent atmosphere...

WOODY (V.O.)
Get some light on the hole so I can locate it.

MCCONNELL
I've got a better idea.
(shouts to Terri)
Stay there!

He starts rooting through Phil's storage area - bags of M&Ms, * comic books - looking for what he needs. *

A107 INT. COCKPIT. NIGHT. A107

Phil is now strapped into the pilot's seat. He's scared, sweating hard, but concentrating fiercely as his one good hand works a battery-powered screwdriver. *

(CONTINUED)

A107 CONTINUED:

He's removing the panel of the main computer bay. Over the intercom, he can hear the merciless struggle going on elsewhere.

WOODY (V.O.)
I'm topside, Jim, do you know which sector?

MCCONNELL (V.O.)
I'm workin' on it!

107 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT. 107

The lower Hab deck is no longer revolving. Woody pops his thrusters and drifts over the metallic skin. But there's such a vast area to search!

WOODY
Jesus, uh, OK, this is gonna be like searching for a needle in a haystack.

108 INT. LOWER HAB NIGHT. 108

McConnell locates a can of Dr. Pepper, shakes this violently, then tosses it up to Terri, who's still in the tunnel mouth. She catches the drifting can, confused. When McConnell speaks again, he's gasping for air.

MCCONNELL
Shake out the liquid.

TERRI
Jim, I don't -

MCCONNELL
Shake it out near the hull!

Terri shakes out soda from the open can. She and McConnell watch the brown stream of fluid swirl up into the air, caught by escaping oxygen. It rises towards the "ceiling" of the outer hull, like a miniature tornado.

109 thru 110 OMITTED 109 thru 110

111 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT. 111

Woody still drifts over the hull, searching intently as his frustration builds.

WOODY
C'mon, c'mon, where <u>are</u> you...?

COMPUTER (V.O.)
Fifty per cent atmosphere...

112 INT. LOWER HAB. NIGHT. 112

Terri, staring at the ceiling, sees something remarkable.

THE SODA STREAM

Swirling ever tighter, has formed a whirlpool that's now being sucked out through the breach hole in the hull. She can now see the ugly puncture for the first time.

MCCONNELL
(gasping)
Woody, the breech is in sector four!
Sector <u>four</u>, copy that?

112 CONTINUED:

WOODY (V.O.)
Copy, I' heading there now.

Terri turns, excited by McConnell's triumph; she's just in time to see him collapse to the floor below her, as he starts to lose consciousness. He's deathly pale.

113 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT. 113

Woody spots a tiny geyser of brownish ice crystals spouting out of the hull of the lower Hab. It's some distance away from him, but clearly visible.

WOODY
(to himself, marveling)
Sonofabitch. You never did that in the simulator.

114 INT. LOWER HAB. NIGHT. 114

Terri pushes off from the ladder, drifting weightlessly down to McConnell. She opens the valve of the oxygen cannister, pushing the plastic mask over McConnell's face. He sucks in air, color returning to his skin as he revives.

115 INT. COCKPIT. NIGHT. 115

CLOSE ON THE COMPUTER'S GUTS,

An incredible tangle of tubes, wires, chips, as Phil's gloved fingers - both hands now - probe desperately through them.

PHIL
Where are you, you little bastard, where are you...?

PHIL WINCES WITH PAIN,

As he moves his hands and forearms deep inside the computer bay. Around him, several of the smaller screens and gauges are starting to malfunction, the data streams breaking apart, streaking into electronic snow. He shoots a tense glance at

THE NAVIGATIONAL MONITOR

Which is flickering crazily. It shows the ship moving much closer to its critical MOI point, indicated by a flashing red triangle aimed down at the Martian surface.

COMPUTER
Forty percent atmosphere...

116 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT. 116

Woody, popping his thrusters, moves as fast as he can towards the protruding finger of crystal, but he's not there yet.

All of a sudden Woody's thrusters cut out. The ship is moving by, a meter beneath him. Woody punches his arm controls. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED: 116

Then just as the outer edge of the hab starts to pass him, the thrusters kick back in. Woody grabs the edge, starts to move to the hole. Woody lets out a breath.

WOODY
(to himself)
Whoa.

117 INT. LOWER HAB. NIGHT. 117

McConnell, holding his breath, grabs a patch gun from a storage locker. Terri's still got the O-2 cannister. He nods to her, and together they push off from the floor, leaping weightlessly up to the other side of the Hab, the "ceiling." They reach the gaping puncture, which they now see has been only partially dammed by the soda ice.

118 INT. COCKPIT. NIGHT. 118

VERY CLOSE ON THE COMPUTER'S INTERIOR

As Phil's gloved fingers finally locate the plug he's been searching for. He hopes. And grip it firmly.

PHIL
Gotcha!

PHIL TAKES A DEEP BREATH,

Says a silent prayer. Then he yanks the plug. SHRILL WHINES, ELECTRONIC CRACKLES from all around him, as the systems are abruptly shut down, in a way they were never meant to be mishandled. Terrifyingly, a couple of the monitors arc to each other as they die. Dodging sparks, Phil stares at

THE NAVIGATIONAL MONITOR

As it also flickers and dies. Now they're flying blind.

COMPUTER
Thirty percent atmosphere...

119 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT. 119

Woody arrives at the ice finger, knocks away the big crystal, then pulls his patch equipment from a pouch.

120 INT. LOWER HAB. NIGHT. 120

In the Hab, Terri uses the base of the O-2 cannister to smash away the interior ice chunk, then McConnell, who's getting wobbly again, blasts the hole with the epoxy gun. As he works, Terri gives him another hit of air.

COMPUTER
Twenty percent atmosphere...

The lights flicker out in the Hab.

121 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT. 121

Outside, Woody slaps a big square patch over the hole, rips off the backing.

CLOSE ON THE PATCH

As it changes color and shrinks, drawing itself down into the metal of the hull.

A122 INT. COCKPIT. NIGHT. A122

VERY CLOSE ON THE COMPUTER'S INTERIOR,

As Phil's fingers re-connect the same plug.

PHIL PULLS HIS HAND OUT

From inside the computer bay. He's trembling, sweat-streaked inside his faceplate. Blood has soaked through his gauze pads. His good hand hovers over the red main power switch. The moment of truth.

PHIL
OK... OK now...

With a dramatic click, he throws the switch, hard-booting the computer system back on. He stares at the screens.

Nothing happens!

PHIL (cont'd)
Come on. Come on...!

Frightened, furious, Phil bangs on the switch with his cordless screwdriver. When all else fails, hit something.

122 INT. LOWER HAB. NIGHT. 122

Feeble starlight from the viewports. McConnell and Terri, drifting side by side, stare at one another, expecting to die within seconds. It feels like an agonizing eternity.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: 122

COMPUTER
Twenty percent atmosphere...

McConnell's eyes widen, as he realizes this is the same as the last reading.

COMPUTER
Pressure stabilizing... Atmosphere level increasing.

Terri and McConnell look at each other. Tears of relief in her eyes. He is exhausted, nearly spent, but manages a grin. She holds the O-2 mask up to his face, and as he grips it, breathing deeply, they hug one another.

123 INT. COCKPIT. NIGHT. 123

The lights and computer screens are flickering back on. All of them! The cockpit lights up like a Christmas tree. Phil bounces up and down like a madman, babbling in triumph.

PHIL
Yes! Awriiiight! Had it all the way. Yes!

Forgetting his injury, he pounds his gloved fist on the console in triumph.

PHIL (cont'd)
Shit!

He wrings his injured hand, then his gaze is caught by

THE NAVIGATIONAL MONITOR

Which pops back on, showing the ship and the MOI point coming perilously close together.

PHIL'S EYES WIDEN IN FEAR

As he keys his mike urgently.

PHIL (cont'd)
Get back in here, guys!

124 EXT. SPACE. NIGHT. 124

Woody floats above the repaired hole, scanning the nearby surface of the hull.

WOODY
Jim, there's a lot of scarring... I'd better check for other punctures while I'm out here.

(CONTINUED)

MCCONNELL (V.O.)
Negative, negative. Woody, get back inside. We've gotta start the checklist for orbital insertion.

WOODY
(a beat; reluctantly)
Copy, I'm heading there now.

Woody jets back towards the open EVA hatch. But as he reaches this, about to re-enter the ship, he's captured momentarily by a breathtakingly beautiful sight below him.

SUNRISE OVER MARS

As the huge planet is REVEALED in all its red, unearthly glory. It's so close now that individual features can be seen with the naked eye - the vast chasm of Valles Marineris, and then Olympus Mons, poking all the way up through the Martian atmosphere. A stunning, alluring spectacle.

WOODY

Stares down at Mars, enthralled, as sunlight floods the side of the spaceship, sparkles off his visor. Dawn, after a very long night indeed. He whispers lovingly, under his breath.

WOODY
Hey, Beautiful...

Then he stirs himself out of his reverie and hurries through the EVA hatch.

CAMERA DRIFTS QUICKLY BACK and down along the hull as stark sunlight flares off the big propellant tanks, three in a row, and the thick silver tubes that join them. There's a good deal of scarring and denting from the meteor shower. Then, as the ship begins to MOVE OUT OF FRAME...

WE MOVE IN CLOSER

On one of these tubes, a feeder line to the engine bells, we see a scatter of tiny, undetected holes, about the size of the eraser at the end of a pencil. So small, so apparently harmless...

125 thru 127 OMITTED 125 thru 127

A128 INT. EVA AIRLOCK. DAY. A128

As Woody enters, stripped from the MMU, dripping with sweat, McConnell is waiting for him. For a moment the two men just look at each other, then they surge forward into a fierce hug.

WOODY
(whispers)
Know what? You've got enough left.

McConnell looks at him, understands.

(CONTINUED)

Terri sits nearby, where she has just finished stitching up Phil's hand. As Woody goes to her, she rises from her seat and looks at him tears of relief and pride in her eyes.

TERRI
Piece of cake?

WOODY
Well. Easier than the cha-cha.

He scoops her into his arms; they kiss passionately.

Phil is blinking; something seems to be getting into his own eyes. His voice catches for a moment.

PHIL
I don't know what you're getting so cocky about. We scored better times in the sim at least twice.

MCCONNELL
(grins)
How's his hand?

Terri separates from Woody, looks down at Phil.

TERRI
Seems OK. Couple of the tendons are going to be a little tight for awhile. Try to close your fingers, Phil, nice and slowly.

Phil starts curling up his fingers. The middle digit remains extended in the universal gesture. They all consider this for a moment. Then Phil looks up cheerfully.

PHIL
Well, at least I'll still be able to drive.

After a split-second they get it, and the whole crew roars with LAUGHTER, which builds and builds; they're almost giddy with the relief of the tension...

B128 EXT. DEEP SPACE. DAY. B128

MARS RECOVERY

Sails INTO VIEW, with small attitude thrusters firing as the great ship maneuvers into position for its orbital-capture burn. Mars looks very large, blood-red. The entire spectacle is majestic, awe-inspiring.

WOODY
OK, we're ready to light this candle. Go/No Go for braking burn and MOI. Engines?

128 INT. COCKPIT. DAY. 128

All four astronauts are strapped in, fully suited and helmeted. Mars looms through the cockpit windows. The atmosphere is electric with excitement.

MCCONNELL
Go.

WOODY
Systems.

TERRI
Go.

WOODY
Nav.

PHIL
Go.

WOODY
We are Go for the burn. I'm fueling the engines.

He flips three switches, in rapid sequence, and...

129 EXT. MARS RECOVERY. DAY. 129

As we MOVE IN on the damaged fuel line, we see a tiny but steady spray of fuel venting from the hole caused by the meterorite. This freezes into eerie streamers and chunks, which slowly drift away from the ship. They're quite beautiful.

PHIL (V.O.)
Optimum angle of entry minus seven degrees. Six... Five...

130 INT. COCKPIT. DAY. 130

Woody looks at the others for moment - everyone is set, looking good - then reaches for a last switch.

PHIL
Four... Three...

Woody hesitates, then glances at McConnell.

(CONTINUED)

WOODY
Jim?

McConnell, moved by this honor, nods. He reaches out to throw the switch himself.

MCCONNELL
Let's go to Mars.

As the countdown indicator reaches "0000.00.00", a final signal PINGS, and he flips the switch.

131 EXT. MARS RECOVERY. DAY. 131

In total silence, the engines ignite. The second they do, the streamers of frozen fuel explode in a white flash.

132 INT. COCKPIT. DAY. 132

With alarms sounding, the four astronauts are slammed violently forward, against their restraints.

WOODY
What the-

MCCONNELL
Shut down engines!

He and Woody both reach out, straining against the incredible G-forces, and manage to grab a red emergency lever, yanking it down hard.

133 EXT. MARS RECOVERY. DAY. 133

Too late! IN SLOW MOTION, we see a terrifyingly violent chain reaction. The fuel tanks themselves explode, one after another. The supporting metal struts are vaporized. The solar panels are snapped off. Two of the huge engine bells are smashed sideways, out of alignment, while the third, trailing pieces of the cowling, goes hurtling off, PAST CAMERA, like a flaming cannon ball. The entire aft section of the ship, including much of the lower Hab, instantly becomes a shredded, charred tangle of metal, and even worse, the explosion causes what's left of the ship - mainly the EVA chamber and cockpit - to tumble end over end, cartwheeling down towards Mars.

134 INT. COCKPIT. DAY. 134

In the windows, Mars goes crazily in and out of view. The astronauts, flung this way, then that, are all fighting against unconsciousness.

134 CONTINUED: 134

WOODY
Engines negative! No response! I've got no attitude control!

MCCONNELL
Manual separation! Blow the bolts!

WOODY
Negative! The CM doesn't have enough thrust to correct this rotation!

PHIL
We're too steep! Falling into the atmosphere...!

135 EXT. MARS RECOVERY. DAY. 135

From further away, the charred remainder of the ship can be seen spinning down towards Mars, which now fills the screen, looming as large as Earth, when seen from the space shuttle. The ship's motion is mercifully slowing as it hits the outer atmosphere, but just as clearly this steep, unplanned angle of entry dooms it.

PHIL
Christ, at this angle we'll burn up!

136 INT. COCKPIT. DAY. 136

ON A COMPUTER,

Their ANGLE OF ENTRY is shown - much too direct - with an indicated swerve into blinking red disaster. Warnings flash: CRITICAL ENTRY! PULL OUT!

WOODY
How much time've we got?

PHIL
I don't know! Three minutes? I don't know!

McConnell's mind is racing furiously, desperately.

MCCONNELL
Where's the REMO?

PHIL
The Resupply Module? Why? That's not -

MCCONNELL
Where is it?!

(CONTINUED)

Phil punches buttons. ON THE SCREEN a second ellipse appears: a blinking orange dot labelled "REMO." It appears to be soon intersecting with their own trajectory.

PHIL
Uh, it's close...

MCCONNELL
Damn it, how close?!

PHIL
(shaken)
I - I don't know. It'll take time...

MCCONNELL
We don't have time! Figure it out! Now!

Phil frantically types in commands on the computer.

WOODY
Jim, we're dead stick, there's no way to maneuver this ship into a link-up!

MCCONNELL
Not the ship. Just us. We have to go EVA.

They look at him, stunned. Leave the ship?

PHIL
You want us to transfer in suits?

TERRI
Jesus, Jim - if we don't make it - if we miss the REMO...

MCCONNELL
There's no other choice! Phil, how close?!

PHIL
One kilometer, that's the best I can do!

They stare at Woody. We feel the full, terrible weight of his responsibility. Four lives hang on his call.

WOODY
Prepare to abandon ship.

137 thru 141 OMITTED

137 thru 141

142 EXT. SPACE. DAY. 142

The astronauts are outside the ship, tethered to each other with long shock cords. Other cords, clipped to their suits, trail gear bags. Phil clutches a silver metallic case - his precious computer repair kit. Woody is in the MMU. They're all rotating at the same speed as the ship behind them.

WOODY
On my mark, seven percent left thruster. Three, two, one, fire.

All four astronauts fire a brief, simultaneous burst from the tiny attitude control thrusters in their suits. This stops their rotation, bringing their travel under control. The ship continues spinning in the background.

Woody takes a final look at the charred, doomed Mars Recovery. The only home they've known for six months. He exchanges a silent glance with the others. They all expect to be dead in the next few minutes. Woody takes a breath, nods.

WOODY
Okay. Let's go.

He pops the big thrusters on the MMU and starts heading away from the ship. The cord between Woody and the others pulls taut and they start to follow.
WIDE SHOT

Of Woody leading them away from the crippled spaceship, against the magnificent backdrop of the blood-red planet below. Four tiny figures, all alone in space.
ANGLE ON MCCONNELL AND THE OTHERS

As Phil looks back, his eyes searching the stars.

TERRI
What're you looking for?

PHIL
(softly, sadly)
Earth.

TERRI
(beat)
Hey. When we get back? We really will have to try this in the sim.

He tries to smile. So does she.

MCCONNELL
How we doin' on fuel, Woody?

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED: 142

Woody eyes a small display screen on his forearm.

WOODY
I'm at fifty percent.
(looking down)
But I don't see the REMO.

143 THEIR POV 143

Everyone is looking back at the curve of Mars against black space, expecting to see the REMO coming up behind them.

144 TERRI 144

Happens to glance directly below.

TERRI
There she is!

145 THEIR POV 145

The black outline of the little cargo craft drifts against the red of Mars.

WOODY
Jesus. She's not where I thought she'd be.

PHIL
We're going to miss her.

146 WOODY 146

Looks again at his display screen, frustrated.

MCCONNELL
What do you think?

WOODY
We can't catch it. Not like this.

MCCONNELL
(thinking quickly)
Use the tether.

From a compartment on the side of the MMU, Woody pulls out...

THE TETHER GUN

About the size of a large flare gun. There's a carabiner-like hook five inches in diameter on the front of the gun.

MCCONNELL
We'll only have one, maybe two shots before she's out of reach.

WOODY
It'll be better if I leave you the gun while I run out to the REMO. I've got enough fuel left for that.

MCCONNELL
You'll be going too fast.

WOODY
I'll aim to overshoot, then brake like hell; arc it in.

McConnell looks at him. They both know how risky this is, and they also know it's their only chance. Woody flips a switch on the gun and pulls on the hook. Off it comes, trailing wire. Woody clips the hook to the MMU, then hands McConnell the gun.

WOODY
Seeya in a few.

McConnell nods. Woody and Terri exchange a look - tender, loving - then Woody turns around and fires the MMU jets at full throttle. As Woody pulls away, line unspools from the tether gun.

147 WOODY AND THE REMO 147

Woody is chasing the REMO from above. It's as if he were in an airplane, trying to land on a car racing along a freeway. Woody is picking up speed quickly. Maybe too quickly. He checks his armpad display screen.

WOODY
Okay. I'm on path to overshoot. I'm gonna take the edge off.

Woody starts braking with the MMU thrusters as hard as he can.

CLOSE ON THE THRUSTERS

Glowing with orange flame. They suddenly cut off.

WOODY'S EYES

Show alarm. He checks his display.

147 CONTINUED: 147

WOODY
I'm out. Coming in hot. Still long.
(beat)
Abandoning the unit. I'll brake with suit jets.

Woody hits some buttons and the MMU's latches snap open. He grabs the hook connected to the tether line, then pushes himself free of the MMU, starts firing his small suit jets.

148 WOODY'S POV 148

He's still going very quickly.

149 WITH MCCONNELL, TERRI AND PHIL 149

Floating close together. The tether line is still unspooling from the gun. They watch Woody, below and ahead of them, as he races towards the REMO. Terri's heart is in her throat.

TERRI
Oh Jesus. Jesus...

McConnell reaches a glove out, touching her arm.

150 BACK ON WOODY 150

Still speeding towards the REMO. His suit jets cut out.

WOODY
Suit jets gone. But I'm gonna make contact...

151 MCCONNELL, TERRI AND PHIL 151

Stare at Woody's distant figure.

INTERCUT -

MCCONNELL
At what velocity?

WOODY
Impact's gonna be a little rough.

MCCONNELL
At what velocity?

WOODY
(beat)
Thirty-two.

A look between McConnell and Terri; her face is stricken.

(CONTINUED)

151 CONTINUED: 151

MCCONNELL
I'm gonna use the gun to slow you.

WOODY
No! You slow me and I'll fall short.

MCCONNELL
It's too fast, Woody.

WOODY
No choice. I'll be okay. Here we go...

152 WOODY AND THE REMO 152

Woody's coming down on the module at over thirty kilometers an hour. He holds the hook out in front of him with one hand while grabbing the tether line with the other, and WHAM! - he crashes into the REMO.

WOODY'S HAND

Slams the hook against a receiver on the hull of the REMO.

IT CONNECTS -

WOODY

Tries to hold onto the tether line but his momentum is too much.

HIS GLOVED HANDS

Are ripped from the line.

WOODY

Slides over the hull of the REMO.

HIS HANDS

Grasp in vain for something to grab onto. They drag and bump and then finally his fingers close on... empty space.

153 WOODY 153

Is past the REMO, freefalling toward Mars.

154 BACK ON MCCONNELL, TERRI AND PHIL 154

As Terri screams.

TERRI
Woody!!

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED: 154

McConnell hits a button on the tether gun and starts to reel them quickly in towards the REMO.

155 WOODY 155

Tries his suit jets again - they're empty.

156 HIS POV 156

Falling away from the REMO.

157 MCCONNELL AND THE OTHERS 157

Are being reeled towards the REMO by the tether line. Another couple hundred meters to go.

MCCONNELL
Woody, what's your status?

INTERCUTTING -

WOODY
(after a beat)
Uh, well, no suit jets and I'm still carrying a good deal of velocity.

MCCONNELL
As soon as we get hooked up, I'll come get you.

WOODY
(after a beat)
Uh, I'd have to say negative on that, Jim.

MCCONNELL
Negative on the transmission?

WOODY
No, I heard you. Negative on the maneuver. I am not retrievable.

McConnell and Terri share a quick, anguished look.

TERRI
Woody, that's not possible. You're not going that fast.

WOODY
It comes down to the amount of fuel, honey. The suit jets were designed for attitude control, not travel. Retrieval just won't work.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED: 157

PHIL
It has to work!

WOODY
Hey, believe me, I don't like it any more than you do.

TERRI
Woody -

WOODY
Run the numbers, Jim.

MCCONNELL
I am.

McConnell finishes looking over the numbers on his display pad. Terri is staring at him. When McConnell's eyes meet hers, they are red-rimmed. Haunted.

MCCONNELL
Woody, you hang tight. We'll get into the REMO, fire her up, drop her into a lower orbit and come scoop you up.

WOODY
Sounds good, Jim.

TERRI
It's gonna take half an hour to get the REMO reoriented! Woody'll be... He'll be in the atmosphere by then!

MCCONNELL
Then we'll have to get her moving faster.

TERRI
We don't have time!

WOODY
You listen to Jim, honey. It's a good plan.

TERRI
No! We are going to -

PHIL
Oh Jesus, look! The ship!

Phil points. McConnell and Terri look.

158 THE MARS RECOVERY COCKPIT 158

Is now several kilometers below and behind them. It's glowing red... then orange... then white. Then it erupts into a giant fireball, devoured by friction with Mars' atmosphere.

159 MCCONNELL, TERRI AND PHIL IN DEEP SPACE 159

Are all staring at this, awed, when McConnell happens to look up again. He sees something alarming.

MCCONNELL
Look out!

THEIR POV

They are drifting quickly into the REMO.

MCCONNELL
Brakes!

ALL THREE

Fire their suit jets, slowing themselves down. They bang into the REMO at about one-tenth the speed Woody did. They find handholds and grab on. McConnell hits a button on the tether gun.

THE HOOK

Releases from the REMO's hull. McConnell hits another button and it is reeled all the way into the gun. Phil is already scrabbling at a latch on the REMO's outer airlock door.

MCCONNELL
Okay, let's get inside! Phil, start dumping the cargo, or there won't be room for us.

PHIL
But we need those supplies for -

MCCONNELL
Dump the cargo. Hang on, Woody!

160 WOODY 160

Is looking back at the REMO. Smiles with relief to see that Terri has reached it safely.

WOODY
Will do, Jim.

(CONTINUED)

160 CONTINUED: 160

He turns to look at...

MARS

Right below him, filling his field of view. A long beat.

WOODY
(softly)
Hey, Beautiful...

161 BACK AT THE REMO 161

Terri makes a snap decision. She grabs the tether gun from McConnell's surprised hands, then pushes off from the REMO. McConnell lunges after her, his gloved hand straining.

MCCONNELL
Terri, no!

But it's too late. She's already out of reach, and now fires her suit jets, pulling quickly away from the REMO.

MCCONNELL

Is reaching to activate his own jets, when

PHIL'S HAND

Grabs at his wrist, restraining this suicidal courage. They stare at each other. McConnell wrenches his hand free, half-maddened, agonized, staring after Terri.

MCCONNELL
Goddammit, Terri, it won't work!

But Terri keeps on going.

162 WOODY 162

Looks back at the REMO, as he continues to fall towards Mars. Sees the small figure of his wife heading towards him.

WOODY
Terri, what are you doing?

INTERCUT --

TERRI
I'll tell you what I'm not doing, Woody.
I'm not going to watch you die.

WOODY
Terri -

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED: 162

TERRI
You'd do the same for me.

163 AT THE REMO 163

Phil is watching as Terri drops towards the distant twinkle of Woody's suit lights. The airlock door hangs open. Phil looks at McConnell, anguished.

MCCONNELL
Get inside. Dump the cargo, then start the systems.
(Phil hesitates)
Now.

164 INTERCUTTING BETWEEN WOODY AND TERRI - 164

As Woody keys his mike. Tries to steady his voice.

WOODY
No. I wouldn't come for you. Not if it just wasn't possible.

TERRI
I can do it!

WOODY
No, Terri, you can't! You don't have enough fuel to get me, stop us both, and get us back. Hell, you come any farther and you won't have enough to get back yourself.

No response from Terri.

WOODY
Listen to me, goddammit! You have to stop! You have to stop now!

MCCONNELL
He's right, Terri... It's no use.

Terri looks at her armpad display.

165 CLOSE ON DISPLAY SCREEN 165

As her fuel indicator drops from 50 percent to 49 to...

166 TERRI 166

Releases her thumb from the toggle control.

HER SUIT JETS

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED: 166

Stop firing.

TERRI

Drifts, staring towards Woody.

167 TERRI AND WOODY 167

Are on the same trajectory, going the same speed, and only about a hundred meters apart. But it might as well be infinity.

WOODY
Okay, honey...? You gotta go back now.

TERRI
The hell I do.

Terri raises up the tether gun and pulls the trigger.

THE HOOK

Comes shooting out of the gun, wire spooling out behind it.

WOODY

Watches as it comes shooting down toward him.

PLATE POV - MOVING - AS

Woody gets larger and larger, the hook gets closer and closer, and then SNAP! - the hook stops.

ANGLE ON THE TETHER GUN

The wire has run all the way out.

WOODY

Looks at the drifting hook, ten agonizing meters away from him. His only life preserver.

TERRI

Hits the button and the wire starts winching fast back into the gun.

WOODY
What are you doing?

TERRI
I'm gonna jet a little closer and try again.

(CONTINUED)

167 CONTINUED: 167

WOODY
Terri, you spend any fuel getting closer, you won't get back, and if anyone tries to get you, they'll die too.

No response from Terri.

THE HOOK

Is whipping back toward Terri and the gun. Woody's voice cracks; he's very close to tears. Pleading now.

WOODY
Honey, please go back. Go back and help everyone get down to the surface.

The hook slams back against the muzzle of the gun. Terri re-sets the gun quickly, in an anguished fury.

TERRI
I am not losing you.

WOODY
I can't let you do it. I can't. I'm sorry.

TERRI

Looks at Woody, two hundred meters away, sensing something different in his voice now, a terrible resolve...

TERRI
Woody...?

168 WOODY 168

Raises his hands to his helmet ring. His eyes shining.

WOODY
I love you, Terri. God how I love you.

He unscrews the ring, pops the seal. The outrush of air pushes his helmet all the way off. Woody shuts his eyes and opens his mouth.

TERRI
Woody, nooooooo...!!!

Ice crystals bloom with Woody's last breath. There's nothing to suck in. He doesn't fight it. He lets death come.

169 ANGLE ON TERRI 169

Tears streaming, chest heaving, frantic.

TERRI
Woody, oh Woody, please God, no!

HER THUMB

Hovers over her suit jet toggle control. McConnell's voice, from the distance, sounds very tired. Like he's aged fifty years in the blink of an eye.

MCCONNELL
Come back, Terri.

Terri's thumb is still poised. Death would be better.

170 ANGLE ON MCCONNELL 170

Outside the REMO. The hatch is still open. We see Phil inside, staring out anxiously towards Terri.

MCCONNELL
(quietly, simply)
He's gone.

He sees no movement from the distant, small figure of Terri.

MCCONNELL
Please, Terri...
(long beat)
We need you.

171 TERRI'S THUMB 171

Pushes the toggle control... to one side, not forward.

172 TERRI'S FACE 172

Inside her helmet, is streaming with tears. She turns herself around, reluctantly. Heads slowly back towards the REMO.

173 INT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION. MMCR. DAY. 173

On the big screen at MMCR, a glowing green icon labelled "MARS RECOVERY" is shown in orbit, as a stream of computer figures crawls beside it.

SUPER TITLE: "SPACE STATION. MMCR. 20 MINUTE TIME LAG."

Beck stands by the NEW CAPCOM, as the latter repeats headset data.

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED: 173

NEW CAPCOM
Okay, they're Go for the burn and MOI. Should be initiating the burn just about... now.

Suddenly the data stream goes crazy. It shivers, streaks, breaks up... then stops. The blinking green icon representing Mars Recovery glows brighter... then vanishes.

A moment of stunned silence in the big room. Then a rising babble of scared, confused voices.

RAY BECK

Takes a step forward, staring helplessly at the screen. His face goes pale, stricken. His worst nightmare is taking place, right before his eyes - and for the second mission in a row...

DISSOLVE TO:

174 EXT. REMO. MARS ORBIT. NIGHT. 174

The REMO is now on the night side of Mars. Cargo boxes, packing cases and assorted equipment containers float outside. The hatch is sealed.

175 INT. REMO. MARS ORBIT. NIGHT. 175

McConnell hovers by a bulkhead. He's anguished, haunted by the image of Woody's death. We see him struggling to overcome his grief and shock, trying to force himself to concentrate on the critical tasks at hand. In front of him, a panel has been opened; he's facing

A SMALL UTILITY MONITOR *

Already glowing, surrounded by coded switches, indicator lights, com ports. * *

MCCONNELL

Stares at these, thinking hard, remembering. He's holding a palm-sized computer, already wired into this panel. He begins tapping the keys, but then stops himself. Reconsiders. He turns, looking back at * * *

TERRI AND PHIL

Hunched on what would be the floor if the REMO were on land. They grip stowage straps to keep from drifting. Clearly this tiny, rude cargo craft was never designed for manned operation. It's claustrophobic, bitterly cold.

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED: 175

PHIL'S FACE

Is a map of torment. He is shivering, both from cold and fear, barely holding himself together. He hugs his computer supply case like a scared child would hug a teddy bear.

TERRI

Is worse. A thousand-yard stare. She's in shock.

MCCONNELL

Knows he has to occupy them. Speaks softly.

MCCONNELL
Phil?
(no response)
Hey, Phil...?

Phil looks up at him dully.

MCCONNELL (CON'T)
We're going in blind. We'll deploy the chutes by laptop. I need to get on the data bus, put in a software patch, and try to soften this tin can's landing. I could use your help with the patch.

After a moment Phil releases his strap, pushes towards McConnell. He stares numbly at the monitor for a few beats, then takes the little computer from McConnell. He begins to tap the keys, slowly at first, but then with more confidence.

MCCONNELL
That's great. Good job.
(turning to Terri)
Hey, Terri, I was wondering. Think maybe we could rig some kind of seatbelts out of those cargo straps?

Terri hesitates a moment, then looks at the strap in her hand, as if she's never seen it before. Dully she reaches for another one, begins looping them together.

MCCONNELL

Studies both of their faces intently. Knows that he can't push them too hard, too fast. They're moving like robots, but at least they're moving.

176 EXT. REMO. MARS ORBIT. NIGHT. (MINUTES LATER) 176

Small thrusters are firing, getting the REMO into position for entry into the atmosphere.

(CONTINUED)

176 CONTINUED:

Then all the jets fire in unison, braking the REMO, as it falls away from us, towards Mars at night.

177 INT. REMO. HIGH ATMOSPHERE. NIGHT. 177

The astronauts, restrained on the floor by Terri's jury-rigged strap system, hold on for dear life. The buffeting through the atmosphere is shaking them violently.

BEHIND THEIR FACEPLATES

We see the effect of the incredible g-forces: faces distorted, unable to focus their eyes. Each of them thinking, once again: Now I'm going to die...

178 OMITTED 178

179 EXT. MARS ONE BASE CAMP. NIGHT. 179

The Mars One Base Camp looms in the foreground, like some desolate, otherwordly ghost town. And then, in the night sky beyond it, we see an eerie and beautiful sight: a bright streak of red as the REMO slashes down into the Martian atmosphere, like a shooting star, finally disappearing behind distant mountains. Then all is stillness again, deathly stillness and silence...

180 INT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION. VIEWPORT. DAY. 180

Beck stands by a viewport, staring out into space. He's just lost four good friends, and also knows he is seeing, in this disaster, the probable end of the Mars Program, and the certain end of his own career. He doesn't, at first, even hear the nearby VOICE.

NEW CAPCOM
Ray...? We've got some new data, just coming in.

Beck looks up, his eyes red-rimmed. The CapCom shifts uneasily. He's holding a computer printout.

NEW CAPCOM (cont'd)
We just - it doesn't make any sense. We're not sure how to read this.

BECK
Data?

NEW CAPCOM
Yes sir. Telemetry reports the REMO has left its orbit and reached the Martian surface.

(CONTINUED)

180 CONTINUED: 180

BECK
(pause)
Crashed?

NEW CAPCOM
No sir. Under power.

Beck snatches the paper, staring at it. For the first time we see some life coming back into him.

BECK
When?

NEW CAPCOM
Sixty-three minutes after Mars Recovery went off-line. Sir, the graph reads like a controlled descent. But that doesn't make any -

Beck suddenly understands. And it's a joy to see his face, the tears of happiness that spring into his eyes.

BECK
They used the REMO as a lander.

The CapCom stares back at him, feeling the same surge of hope.

BECK
It's McConnell, it's got to be! Nobody else could have pulled this off. Son of a bitch! They're alive.

181 thru 183 OMITTED 181 thru 183

184 EXT. MARTIAN SURFACE. MARS ONE BASE CAMP. DAY. 184

POV ANGLE - WIDE

As we see the Mars One Base Camp: silent, very still. In the distance, the massive ERV still looms, perched for takeoff, the bottom rungs of its ladder buried.

PANNING

We see that sand has drifted high against the Hab, as well as the sides of the partially-deflated tunnel and greenhouse, and the four-man rover. The oxygen still and propellant plant are almost buried. Solar panels, some of them punctured by micrometeors, FLAP and CREAK eerily in the slight breeze. And finally,

(CONTINUED)

184 CONTINUED: 184

CLOSER TO CAMERA

We see the camp's American flag, still on its toppled pole, but nearly obliterated by sand.

185 ANGLE ON MCCONNELL, TERRI, AND PHIL 185

Who are spooked by this desolation. They've paused at the edge of the camp.

They have dragged along with them from their landing site a crude sledge, improvised from the REMO's hatch cover and some cargo straps. On this, their meager supplies.

McConnell, glancing at the others, knows he's got to keep their spirits up. He kneels, digs out the flag pole. Brushing off the sand, he rights this and re-plants it firmly in the ground, packing the sand down with his boot. He stands for a moment looking at the flag, his eyes moist. Despite the cost, they have made it to Mars.

When he turns, Terri and Phil are looking at him, moved.

MCCONNELL
Better?

PHIL
(pause)
Damn right.

MCCONNELL
Terri, let's see if that oxygen still is operational. Phil, you better check out the ERV. I'll take the Hab. If you find Luke's -

He catches himself. Phil and Terri look at him.

MCCONNELL
Just keep in touch.

186 EXT. ERV. DAY. 186

Phil steps from the umber sand onto the ERV's ladder, begins to climb. The four-man rover is nearby, sand drifted high against its tires.

187 EXT. OXYGEN STILL. DAY. 187

Terri kneels by the oxygen still, begins to scoop away sand with her gloved hands. She still looks numb.

188 EXT. HAB. DAY. 188

MCCONNELL
(on radio)
I'm at the main airlock door.

He unlatches a panel, grips the emergency lever inside, tugs it. After a seeming eternity, the door groans and creaks open. Little puffs of dust and sand swirl about, settle.

MCCONNELL
Entering Hab.

189 EXT. ERV. DAY. 189

Perched atop the ERV's ladder, Phil, using a battery-powered drill, is just removing the final screw from the hatch cover. He lifts off the heavy cover, lets it tumble to the sand.

PHIL
I've got ERV access. I'm going in. Terri, you okay?

190 EXT. OXYGEN STILL. DAY. 190

Terri is still scooping sand. She's just cleared the first row of gauges.

TERRI
Yeah. This is gonna take awhile to get back to 100% capacity.

191 INT. MARS ONE HAB. DAY. 191

McConnell walks through the kitchen, which we recognize. He pauses to look at the table from which Luke and his crew taped their final, fateful message.

HIS BIRTHDAY CUPCAKE

Still sits there, eerily, with its stub of burned-out candle. Half-finished, frozen cups of coffee. Suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, he catches a flash of white. He spins, startled, and sees

HIS OWN REFLECTION,

In his white pressure suit, staring back at him from the screen of a video monitor. Above this is perched the camera the Mars One astronauts used for their comm packets.

MCCONNELL SHIVERS

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED:

This place is filled with ghosts.

192 INT. ERV COCKPIT. DAY. 192

Phil, in the pilot's seat of the ERV, pushes a computer's power button. The screen flickers weakly to life, startling him a bit, but all he sees on it are white streaks, crazy static.

PHIL
ERV appears structurally intact.
Computers are fried, just as we thought.

193 EXT. OXYGEN STILL. DAY. 193

Terri has cleared more gauges, valves. She sits back on her heels, studying the tangle of pipes.

TERRI
Copy that. I've got busted filters here, clogged intakes. Helluva cleanup job, but so far no major damage.

194 INT. GREENHOUSE. DAY. 194

An inner airlock door whooshes open, and McConnell enters. Then stops, astonished.
HIS POV

On a fantastic, almost jungle-like atmosphere. The plants have been allowed - encouraged? - to grow wildly. Some are even pushing against the inflated roof. Water condenses on the leaves and the roof, then is captured and routed through pipes of every shape and size, dripping into a clever assortment of collection jars. Liquid water.

MCCONNELL

Reaches into a bucket, touches the water. His glove comes up before his wondering eyes, dripping. Grasping the implication, he looks down at his forearm instrument pad.

Blinking red letters read "25 deg. C." And something else - the puffy white material of his suit is starting to slightly deflate, revealing his arm's shape. There's air pressure in here!

MCCONNELL

Punches in more numbers, and gets the readout:

"Nitr.78%/ 02 20%/ C02 1%/ Trace gasses 1%."

MCCONNELL

(CONTINUED)

194 CONTINUED: 194

Slowly reaches up, unsealing the neck ring of his helmet. He hesitates, then lifts it off. Takes a deep, quenching lungful of pure air. Holds it in. Lets it slowly out. For a moment he doesn't trust his own voice. Then speaks softly towards his helmet.

MCCONNELL
I'm in the greenhouse. You better... you better come see this for yourselves.

195 INT. ERV. DAY. 195

Phil, still sitting at the cockpit controls, turns. Through a side viewport he can just make out the greenhouse.

PHIL
What is it?

There's no answer. He rises.

196 EXT. OXYGEN STILL. DAY. 196

Terri rises, concerned, and turns. Through the distant, translucent wall of the greenhouse, McConnell's shadowy figure can be seen, moving slowly.

TERRI
Jim...?

197 INT. GREENHOUSE. DAY. 197

McConnell sets down his helmet, starts exploring, pushing through fronds as he makes his way down an aisle. The dripping foliage is so dense it almost chokes his path. Everywhere he looks, he has the sense of a scrounged-together, recycled, jury-rigged environment, where a great deal of ingenuity has come into play. He pauses, looking up...

Overhead, a bellows, stitched together from pieces of plastic tarp, slowly inhales and exhales, pumping air into a vent in the upper deck of the Hab. Its power comes from a crude water wheel, a buckets-and-strut assemblage, tidily sutured with duct tape, like some giant Erector set.

As McConnell turns away from this, still marvelling, a ragged figure leaps through the foliage! It smashes into him, with a HARSH SCREECH, knocking him to the ground.

McConnell, on his back, straddled by his attacker, fights back as best he can. A blur of flailing arms and fists, as he tries to push the creature away. Staring up, he catches a glimpse of the almost unrecognizable

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: 197

LUKE GRAHAM

Whose frightened eyes glare back at him through a swaying curtain of dreadlocks. His skin is creased, weathered, above a scraggly beard. His clothes are tattered, patched together. In one fist he grips a rock hammer, which he swings high overhead, about to drive the claw through McConnell's skull. McConnell grabs his arm desperately, trying to fend him off.

MCCONNELL
Luke, it's me! Jim McConnell!

We see a flash of uncertainty in Luke's eyes. Then he yanks his arm free, and his hammer arcs up even higher, trembles in the air.

LUKE
You're not here!

MCCONNELL
Luke, it's Jim!

LUKE
No, no, you're not... you can't be here.

MCCONNELL
Your wife is Debra! Your son is Bobby! You were reading Treasure Island with him...!

As he stares down at McConnell, Luke's eyes finally light up with recognition. but before he can move, he is seized from behind and flung backwards to the ground, the hammer ripped from his grasp, as Terri and Phil pinion his arms. McConnell scrambles to his feet.

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
Don't hurt him!

McConnell kneels beside Luke, signalling to Terri and Phil that it's okay to let him go. They stand back, pulling off their helmets. Everyone is panting, out of breath.

Luke sits up, slowly studying their features, one after another, as if still not quite certain whether they might vanish. His voice is hoarse, rusty from disuse.

LUKE
Phil...Terri...

Luke looks with incomprehension at McConnell.

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: (2) 197

LUKE (cont'd)
Jim... I don't understand. You're not supposed to be here... Why are you here? Where's Woody?

MCCONNELL
He didn't make it Luke.

Luke stares at McConnell, trying to absorb everything. He looks to Terri, who looks down.

LUKE
Oh no.

Luke shakes his head in dismay. He seems to shrink in on himself. It's all too much for him to take in. McConnell kneels and puts his arm around Luke, comforting him.

198 OMITTED 198

199 INT. ELSEWHERE IN THE GREENHOUSE. DAY (MINUTES LATER). 199

Luke sits on the side of his cot, in the little tented sleeping area he's created in one corner of the greenhouse. Nearby, his hotplate, pots, and some freshly harvested vegetables and greens. The others crouch around him.

MCCONNELL
Luke, what happened here?

A flash of fear in Luke's eyes.

LUKE
(whispers)
We fired the radar. It came. They all died.

MCCONNELL
What came?

LUKE
They all died, but I was spared. Why? Had to be for a reason. Then, all of a sudden, I knew why I was spared.

His voice drops to a conspiratorial whisper.

LUKE
So somebody would be left to figure out the secret.

He taps his forehead, significantly, then nods once or twice. The others exchange an uneasy glance.

MCCONNELL
Luke, we still don't understand.

LUKE
Come. Comecomecome.

He rises quickly and scuttles off, waving an impatient hand, without waiting to see if they'll follow. McConnell, Terri and Phil stare after him for a long moment. Phil breaks the silence.

PHIL
Is it just me? Or is he about two mealpacks short of a picnic?

TERRI
Long term exposure to low gravity can have an adverse impact on the brain.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

199 CONTINUED: 199

TERRI (cont'd)
He could be suffering from a form of asphyxia.

MCCONNELL
Or maybe his whole crew died and he's been marooned alone on Mars. Let's give him time to adjust.

McConnell and Terri follow in the direction Luke went. Phil, trailing, mutters to himself.

PHIL
Greatgreatgreat.

200 EXT. MARS ONE BASE CAMP. DAY. 200

Luke, now in a patched-up pressure suit and grubby-looking helmet, stands peering down unhappily at the improvised sledge, with its meager supplies. McConnell, Terri, and Phil walk up behind him, wearing their helmets again. They hear Luke over his RADIO.

LUKE
So...let me be sure I understand this. Your ship blew up, with all its supplies. Then you emptied the cargo out of the REMO, and it was totalled on landing. You've got no food, no water, no spare oxygen, nothing but what I see here...?

McConnell and the others are silent, embarrassed. Then McConnell nods. Luke looks at him, a cracked grin.

LUKE (cont'd)
What kinda rescue mission is this?

MCCONNELL
That kind.

He points to the computer repair case, as Phil lifts it off a sledge. Luke turns, looks at the case, then Phil.

PHIL
Check it out. New nav boards for the ERV. I got four round-trip tickets, baby, right in here.

LUKE
(softly)
Four.

In some mysterious way, this reminder of Woody's death seems to bring him fully back into himself. He takes Terri by the shoulders, deeply saddened. She meets his gaze.

(CONTINUED)

LUKE (cont'd)
Terri... I'm so sorry. He was a good man.

TERRI
Thanks, Luke.

LUKE
When there's time, we'll talk.

She nods, grateful. A beat. He looks at the others.

200 CONTINUED: (2) 200

LUKE
This way.

He starts off across the sand, and they follow.

201 EXT. GRAVE SITE. DAY. 201

They stand looking down at the three long mounds of dirt, as Luke completes his account of the disaster.

LUKE
...When I came to and dug myself out of the sand, my faceplate was cracked. Leaking badly. I barely made it back to Base. It was weeks before I could work up the nerve to go back out there and look for their...

He has to pause, collect himself.

LUKE
Renee was the only one I could find. But it didn't seem right, somehow, to dig just one grave.

There is an emotional silence. Luke turns, takes a few steps. He stares into the distance, observing the swirling dust around them. McConnell hesitates, notices Luke's gaze.

MCCONNELL
Has it been blowing like this for a while?
(Luke nods)
We saw a big storm from space. But Micker said it was turning south.

Luke looks off into the distance, studies something only he seems to see.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED: 201

LUKE
If it holds course.

McConnell pulls his gaze away from the horizon, looks at Luke.

MCCONNELL
This - whatever it was - this force. You say it came directly out of the top of the mountain?

LUKE
You don't believe me. That's okay. But I'm not crazy, Jim.

McConnell isn't quite sure how to reply to this.

MCCONNELL
What did you mean by its "secret?" What secret?

LUKE
(pause)
You better see for yourselves.

202 thru 203 OMITTED 202 thru 203

204 INT. MARS ONE HAB. DAY. 204

McConnell, Terri, and Phil follow Luke into the Science Lab area of the Hab, then stop in their tracks. Their helmets are off. It's very cold in here; their breath is frosty.

THEIR POV -

The Lab is crammed with rock and sand samples from many locations, all tagged and labelled. There are drawings and diagrams covering the walls: Martian landscapes, annotated maps, and over and over, obsessively repeated, drawings of the vortex that destroyed the Mars One crew.

LUKE
See, where they made their mistake was, they must've planned for it to be visible from Earth...

The others turn, looking at him. Luke is aiming an electric space heater at his computer. As the coils glow red, he rubs his hands together, poised over the keyboard.

204 CONTINUED: 204

MCCONNELL
Who's "they"?

Luke reacts to their blank stares. He has a kind of jittery feverish intensity, a secret excitement.

(CONTINUED)

204 CONTINUED: 204

LUKE
Don't you understand? Hundreds of millions of years have gone by. You've got erosion, sand storms, lava flows, meteor impacts - hell, in that much time, the whole surface would've changed. So no wonder we never saw it before. Well, I mean, we saw it, but not like they meant us too. Too much dirt on it.

The others exchange worried glances. Is he totally nuts?

TERRI
Saw what?

LUKE
This.

On the computer screen they're looking at...

205 CLOSE ON THE MONITOR 205

Pictures of the Face after the disaster, seen from ground-level, in telephoto views. Rising out of a ring of rock and dirt rubble is the shiny-white profile of a gigantic face. The white is smooth, impenetrable. It has the scale of a mountain, but the planes and angles are clearly unnatural.

206 MCCONNELL, PHIL AND TERRI (INT. MARS ONE HAB.) 206

They are stunned. Can hardly believe their eyes.

PHIL
Jesus...

TERRI
What is that...?

LUKE
I don't know. But whatever it is, somebody built it. And not us.

A few moments of silence while they try to absorb this.

MCCONNELL
What about the sound? That signal you heard before the explosion?

LUKE
Good, Jim, good. That's the key.

A click of the mouse and they all HEAR, over speakers, the DEEP PULSING BASS TONE.

(CONTINUED)

206 CONTINUED: 206

LUKE
Hear the pauses? That's what made me realize it's a pattern - a repeating pattern.

MCCONNELL
Mathematical?

Luke is trembling with excitement. His words tumble out very quickly. He's been waiting so long to share this.

LUKE
That's what I thought. There are distinct blocks in the pattern, and within each block the tones come in groups of three. Threethreethree. For months I struggled to analyze it, trying different constructs... Then I thought about dimensions.

MCCONNELL
X-Y-Z coordinates...

LUKE
Right! Three groups equals three dimensions... So I tried assigning different graphic values to each block, group and tone. And finally I got... this.

He types another command. They all look at the monitor, the glow reflecting on their faces. They are amazed again.

207 CLOSE ON THE MONITOR 207

Where we see the beautiful interlocking chain, the universally familiar double helix, of a DNA molecule - the elegant blueprint of life.

208 BACK TO SCENE (INT. MARS ONE HAB.) 208

PHIL
My God... Is that what I think it is?

TERRI
DNA... that's a model of DNA!

LUKE
You see it, too. Thank God. I was afraid I was just suffering from a form of asphyxia.

(CONTINUED)

208 CONTINUED:

She glances at him, surprised that he overheard her earlier diagnosis. But he smiles, not offended.

PHIL
So, okay, so - somebody left this thing here, somebody - other than human. But what the hell is it?

LUKE
My guess is, it's a signature. A self-portrait of whatever species created the Face.

MCCONNELL
But that DNA looks human.

TERRI
No way. It's missing the last pair of chromosomes. See?

MCCONNELL
Yeah, but it's close. Damn close.

TERRI
The difference between a man and an ape is less than three percent of genetic material. But that three percent gives you Mozart. Einstein.

PHIL
Or Jack the Ripper.

They look at him. Then all four turn, stare again at the slowly rotating DNA, pondering its awesome mystery.

MCCONNELL,

When he finally speaks, never takes his eyes off the screen. We can read in them the almost overwhelming grip this mystery has on his imagination.

MCCONNELL
It's been a long day. Let's get a couple hours sleep, then tackle this thing when we're fresher. Phil, your first priority will be to get the motherboards over to the ERV. Concentrate on getting communications up first.
(Phil nods)
Soon as we've got the juice, we'll send a packet to Micker, tell them Luke's OK, and that... everything else that 's happened.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

208 CONTINUED: (2)

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
The rest of us will take an inventory of supplies, see where we stand. Okay?

The others nod in weary agreement. As they start out, towards the relative warmth of the greenhouse, Terri looks at Luke, at his scraggly beard and his long, lank hair. She smiles, brushing some locks off his forehead.

TERRI
C'mon. There's a pair of scissors in my medkit.

209 thru 210 OMITTED 209 thru 210

211 INT. MARS ONE HAB. ANOTHER SECTION. NEXT MORNING. 211 *

As in the Science Area, this space has enough thin oxygen for the astronauts to remain unhelmeted. McConnell and Luke are still going through what few supplies were salvaged from the REMO. *

Luke pauses, rubbing the unfamiliar smoothness of his cheek. His beard is gone, his hair neatly trimmed. McConnell enjoys Luke's own wonder at his transformation. * * *

MCCONNELL *
How do you feel? *

LUKE *
Like I just got back my other three percent. * *

McConnell smiles. Terri enters through the hatch, removing her helmet. * *

TERRI
The backup generator is salvageable, and two of the solar panels. I'm pretty sure I can get the oxygen still back into production, too. So we're not in such bad shape, considering.

LUKE
Good work, Terri.

McConnell, rummaging through Phil's backpack, drops an already-opened bag of M&Ms. The CANDIES scatter and bounce all over the floor.

MCCONNELL
Look at that. Phil's idea of absolute essentials.

Luke and Terri smile. McConnell scoops up the fallen M&Ms. He slows down as he does it, looking at the scatter of little round CANDIES. Something tugging at the back of his mind...

FLASHBACK TO:

212 thru 213 OMITTED 212 thru 213

214 INT. MARS RECOVERY. EVA AIRLOCK. DAY. 214

Phil's intricately designed M&M model of his "ideal woman", floating weightlessly, as McConnell drifts past it, plucking away a couple pieces of the candy. Phil reacting, in good-natured annoyance. The gap in the design left by McConnell's theft...

215 INT. MARS ONE HAB. ANOTHER SECTION. DAY. 215

CLOSE ON MCCONNELL

As he trembles with excitement. With sudden comprehension.

(CONTINUED)

215 CONTINUED: 215

MCCONNELL
It's not a signature.

LUKE
(puzzled)
What?

MCCONNELL
That noise from the Face... It's not a signature. It's a test.

Luke and Terri stare at him.

216 INT. MARS ONE HAB. MOMENTS LATER. 216

McConnell sits in front of the computer back in the science lab area, staring once again at the mysterious DNA model. Luke and Terri stand behind him. McConnell's energy, his new certainty, is almost electrifying.

MCCONNELL
It's asking us for the right answer. It wants us to put in the missing pair of chromosomes.

LUKE
But why?

MCCONNELL
To prove that we're human.

Terri and Luke look at each other, starting to understand.

LUKE
We fired radar into that thing. Concentrated sound waves...

MCCONNELL
Which it interpreted as a wrong answer... Yes! It's like a, a security alarm. When it gets an incorrect response, it defends itself.

217 INT. ERV COCKPIT. DAY. 217

Phil is listening in on radio. He's got panels open, wires dangling, as he works his ongoing repair. He keys his mike, uneasily.

PHIL
So what happens when it gets the right answer?

218 INT. MARS ONE HAB. DAY. 218

As McConnell looks at Luke and Terri.

MCCONNELL
(hesitates)
I don't know. But we've got to find out.
(to Luke, pointing)
Can you work this the other way? Figure out which tones would be equivalent to the missing chromosomes? Then dub them into your recording of the signal?

LUKE
I think so, yes.

MCCONNELL
What about the radar gun? Will it accept that input? Can we transmit a completed signal back to the Face?

Luke stares at him, startled by what he's implying.

219 INT. ERV COCKPIT. DAY. 219

Phil is also growing increasingly nervous.

PHIL
Whoa, whoa, hold on, Jim. What if you're wrong? Whoever goes out there... I mean, what if you're wrong? Three people have already died over that thing.

220 INT. MARS ONE HAB. DAY. 220

As Luke and Terri look tensely at McConnell.

TERRI
Four.

McConnell looks at her.

MCCONNELL
Terri, if we leave here without getting some answers, they all died in vain.

220 CONTINUED: 220

Terri shakes her head.

TERRI
We just don't know enough about that - that thing out there to take any more chances.

MCCONNELL
What are we here for, if not to take chances...?

His passion startles them; they've never seen him so emotional. He points at the computer screen.

MCCONNELL
This means we're not alone. It means we're on the brink of the greatest discovery in mankind's history. But we've still got to prove it. Who knows when someone else will get back here? Or if they ever will? You know what Congress is like. They'll say it's too dangerous, too much loss of life, let's go back to unmanned flights. We could be the last explorers to come here for decades. We're it, guys.
(pause)
We're it.

LUKE
(quietly)
We don't have to go out there. There's a better way.

They look at him, surprised.

221 thru 225 OMITTED 221 thru 225

226 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DAY. 226

The familiar, plucky little figure of ARES-8 wheels across ocher sand, with the radar gun jury-rigged onto its back. Ares' video snout WHIRRS out, extending. The familiar bass rumble of the Face is very loud from here.

LUKE
Checking video feed...

227 INT. MARS ONE HAB. LATE DAY. 227

McConnell, Terri, and Phil have gathered around Luke as he pushes buttons, and a monitor CRACKLES to life. White streaks, then a blurry image, which he tries to enhance. Finally the image starts to sharpen.

LUKE
There!

228 ON THE MONITOR 228

They see the familiar stark white profile of the FACE, shot from ground level, in a SLOWLY APPROACHING ANGLE...

229 THE FOUR ASTRONAUTS 229

Stare at the ominous sight. They're all more nervous than they want to show. Luke's fingers delicately work a joystick as he maneuvers the remote surveyor.

MCCONNELL
How close do we need to get?

LUKE
I'm not sure. Maybe we better stop by that boulder.

A230 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. LATE DAY. A230

Ares-8 whines to a stop by a large boulder, which partially shields it from the Face, looming beyond. The radar gun swivels, locating its target. Then stops, ready to fire.

230 INT. MARS ONE HAB. LATE DAY. 230

Luke looks at Terri, Phil, and McConnell. Phil shuts the lid of the box holding the new nav boards, snaps it protectively down. He nods. Terri takes a deep breath, then she nods.

Luke's hand hovers over the red firing button; a moment of awesome uncertainty and danger. He looks at McConnell, who finally gives a nod of command. Then Luke hits the button.

A231 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. LATE DAY. A231

From the radar gun on Ares-8's back, a sharp, high-pitched electronic burst is emitted, pulsating like a tuning fork as it's fired towards the Face. After a few seconds it stops.

For a moment nothing happens.

(CONTINUED)

A231 CONTINUED: A231

Then the deep bass rumbling stops as well. The only remaining sound is of WIND, stirring up dust on the Martian plains.

231 ANGLE ON THE FACE 231

As suddenly a huge, curved segment of the white surface begins to rise from the earth, like a gigantic hangar door, sliding out of sight into an upper sheath of some kind. The movement is measured, stately, utterly silent. As the segment rises, it reveals a blinding white light: the interior of the Face. No inside details can be seen.

232 INT. MARS ONE HAB. DAY. 232

McConnell, Luke, Terri and Phil stare at this phenomenon, awed. They're barely breathing.

PHIL
Oh my God...

LUKE
It worked... It worked!

MCCONNELL
Check for radiation.

Luke punches buttons, waits anxiously for a readout.

LUKE
Normal. Seismic... normal. Anemometer steady. No sign of the vortex.

PHIL
I don't know what we did, but guys - does that look to you like a hostile gesture?

TERRI
No. More like an invitation.

LUKE
Or another test...

McConnell is staring at the mysterious opening. On his face, a growing look of determination.

MCCONNELL
Luke, the four-man rover. Does it still work?

The others look at him, their expressions changing as they realize what he's implying.

233 thru 238 OMITTED 233 thru 238

239 EXT. MARS ONE BASE CAMP. LATE DAY. 239

McConnell, once again helmeted, emerges from the Hab airlock. Luke, Terri and Phil are coming out behind him. The wind has picked up, and fine dust is blowing. They stop, staring off in astonishment towards

240 A FRIGHTENING SIGHT 240

The entire sky has darkened from its customary salmon into purplish-black at the horizon, with bloody streaks above. The DUST STORM has turned their way; it's now sixty kilometers away and closing. The main body of it reaches two thousand meters above the surface and stretches out along a thousand-kilometer front.

241 THE ASTRONAUTS 241

Stare at this unholy juggernaut, alarmed. McConnell turns to Luke, whose expression is grim.

MCCONNELL
How long before it hits?

LUKE
An hour? Maybe less.

MCCONNELL
How bad?

LUKE
A storm like that? It could go planetary. And last a year.

McConnell stares at him.

LUKE
It'll sock us in, Jim. We won't be able to take off. If that happens, with what few supplies we've got left...? We'll starve to death.

McConnell turns, staring off towards the killer storm. The others look at him with questioning gazes. He turns again. There's the four-man rover, ready to go. Waiting.

MCCONNELL
Phil, how much longer to prep the ERV?

(CONTINUED)

241 CONTINUED: 241

PHIL
Maybe forty-five minutes. It'll be tight, but we can make it.

MCCONNELL
Then there's still time for us to get out there and back.

He looks a question at Luke and Terri, one after the other. Their eyes, tense but excited, signal agreement.

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
Stay here. Continue the repair. If something goes wrong, you get out of here before that storm hits.

PHIL
Go back... alone?

MCCONNELL
If we're not back in forty-five minutes, I want you to prep and launch.
(looks at his armpad display)
That's 1950 hours.

PHIL
Jim -

MCCONNELL
It's not a suggestion, it's an order. You understand?

PHIL
(reluctantly)
I understand. But -

MCCONNELL
You understand what?

PHIL
If you're not back by 1950, I prep and launch.

McConnell nods, satisfied. Looks at Terri and Luke.

MCCONNELL
Let's go.

They start towards the four-man rover. Dust is swirling more thickly through the air, and the WIND IS LOUDER NOW. Phil stands watching them go, a lone, rather forlorn figure.

A242 EXT. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. DUSK. A242

In a WIDE SHOT, we see the rover approaching the Face, across the plains. The sky beyond the Face is almost black, as the storm approaches from that direction. It's marching relentlessly across the planet, with flashes of lightning now rippling up and down its face, and even small tornadoes spinning off near its purple-black base...

242 INT. ERV COCKPIT. DUSK. 242

Phil has panels off. He's reaching into the guts of the main computer, working feverishly. His repair kit is beside him.

A243 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. DUSK. A243

In a HIGH SHOT, we look down across the side of the Face and its vast, open doorway, out of which the bright white light is streaming. Into this corridor of light, we see the rover arrive, slewing to a stop, throwing sand from its wheels.

243 GROUND LEVEL SHOT 243

Looking at the cavernous vertical gap in the side of the Face. The opening towers to a dizzying height above us;

243 CONTINUED:

the white light strains our eyes. The three astronauts ENTER FRAME as we see them, from behind, staring up.

ON THE ASTRONAUTS' AWED FACES

As they are stunned by the immensity of the scene, the cosmic mystery before them. Luke and Terri look at McConnell. Another moment of critical decision. He keys his mike.

MCCONNELL
Phil, do you read me?

244 INT. ERV COCKPIT. DUSK. 244

Phil keys his own mike.

PHIL
Yeah, Jim. Your signal's breaking up a little in the storm, but I read you.

245 EXT. THE FACE. DUSK. 245

McConnell stares into the bright opening. Bathed in its light.

MCCONNELL
We're at the Face. We're gonna need a few minutes here. Same deadline, launch at 1950. With or without us. Do you copy?

PHIL
(pause)
Copy that.

Terri and Luke exchange a tense glance.

TERRI
Jim, are you sure you want to do this?

MCCONNELL
I'm not sure of anything anymore. But I didn't come a hundred million miles just to turn back in the last ten feet.

Luke smiles. The three of them stare into the portal. McConnell, between the others, reaches out and grips each of them by a gloved hand. They take a sort of collective breath. Then they walk forward together, into the light.

246 INT. THE FACE. DUSK. 246

The astronauts continue forward, each of them extending a free hand.

(CONTINUED)

246 CONTINUED: 246

The light is too dazzling for them to gauge distances, textures, colors - anything at all. They can't see walls, ceiling, even a floor.

MCCONNELL
Surface seems firm and level.

LUKE
Roger that. Texture is smooth.

TERRI
I've got good footing and no obstructions. Let's check our -

Behind them, there is an abrupt WHOOOSH, like a giant airlock sealing shut. They turn, startled and nervous. Letting go of each other's hands, Luke and Terri run back the way they came, but almost immediately are stopped by a wall of some sort. The vast hangar-type door has closed behind them.

TERRI
It's solid again! We're trapped.

MCCONNELL
Don't move! Keep this orientation.

The three scared, helmeted faces seem to float in the brightness, some twenty feet apart.

MCCONNELL
(keys his mike)
Phil? Phil, can you still hear me?

247 INT. ERV COCKPIT. DUSK. 247

Phil, saying a silent prayer, reaches over and turns on the main computer. It works! He's immensely relieved.

PHIL
Computers are online! Ready to load software. But guys - we're losing visibility here.

He glances out the cockpit window at the blowing dust. Then realizes that he's hearing only silence over his radio.

PHIL
Guys...? Jim? Luke? Terri? Is anyone there...?

No answer. Phil stares at his radio in dread.

PHIL
Don't leave me.

248 INT. FACE. DUSK. 248

McConnell is staring at his spacesuit's sleeve. He can see that the suit material is starting to deflate, revealing the shape of his arm, just as it did in Luke's greenhouse. He hesitates, then begins to unscrew the sealing ring on his right glove.

Terri and Luke see this.

TERRI
(alarmed)
Jim, what're you doing? You'll depressurize!

MCCONNELL
I don't think so.

McConnell makes the final twist on his glove and there's the hiss of rushing air.

LUKE
Jim, seal it!

MCCONNELL
No. That was air going into my suit, not out. Look at your own suits -they're not rigid anymore. We've got pressure in here.

Luke looks at his sleeve. McConnell's right.

TERRI
Above Mars atmospheric? That's impossible.

MCCONNELL
We're millions of miles from Earth and we're inside a gigantic white face. What's impossible?

Terri types on her arm keypad. She's amazed.

TERRI
There's six psi in here...
(taps more keys)
Nitrogen and oxygen.

LUKE
Otherwise known as air?

Terri nods. McConnell starts unscrewing his helmet ring. Luke follows suit.

(CONTINUED)

TERRI
Hey, there may be some lethal trace gasses I haven't picked up yet, or... or... oh, the hell with it.

Terri starts taking off her helmet. In a few moments, all three helmets are off. They hold them, glowing softly, against their chests, as they breathe deeply and gratefully. Air. And then, at this very moment, as if they have just passed another kind of test...

249 A HIGH, STRIATED WALL 249

Appears through the glare, soaring up before their startled eyes. White, metallic, composed of complexly-linked bands, plates, ramps. It's part of a STRUCTURE whose overall height and breadth keep us from understanding its purpose. But the hatch opening slowly in its side, at the top of an approach ramp, is unmistakable. Radiant white light streams out from within, forming a glowing tunnel, down towards the astronauts.

THE ASTRONAUTS BLINK

Raising their gloves against the dazzling glow. At the end of this tunnel of light, inside the hatch frame

250 A SHAPE MATERIALIZES 250

And slowly resolves itself into a glowing humanoid form, which we somehow sense is female. She appears benign, wondrous. This glowing MARTIAN - a holograph - regards the astronauts for a few moments, then beckons to them, as if to say "Enter." All her motions are both calm and calming - precise, unhurried, gracious.

251 MCCONNELL, LUKE AND TERRI 251

Look at each other. They're awed into silence, and still tense, but now more out of excitement and anticipation than fear. Their eyes agree: Let's go.

They walk forward slowly, carrying their helmets, up the ramp and into the tunnel of light, following the Martian, who retreats before them. They go through the hatch and disappear inside.

252 INT. MARTIAN STRUCTURE. DUSK. 252

Following the Martian, they find themselves in a round, open space, defined by light, with a smooth matte-metallic floor, but without apparent walls.

(CONTINUED)

252 CONTINUED: 252

The Martian stops, turns, facing them. The astronauts stop, too, uncertain what they're meant to do. Then the Martian gestures again.

A cylindrical holographic column appears, rising from the floor in front of the astronauts. Inside it, a swirl of eerie lights, millions of them, like cosmic fireflies...

MCCONNELL, LUKE, AND TERRI

Set down their helmets, then cautiously converge around this column, forming a loose triangle. As they stare into it, the myriad lights are reflected off their own eyes and their spacesuits.

253 IN THE HOLOGRAPHIC COLUMN 253

The whirling lights resolve into images, which relate to them the story of ancient Mars:

A BLUE PLANET

we do not recognize. All is peaceful, beautiful.

254 INTERCUT 254

MCCONNELL
(softly)
Is that what I think it is?

LUKE
Yeah. It's Mars.

255 SUDDENLY A HUGE ASTEROID 255

Tumbles through space towards the planet...

TERRI
Oh my God.

256 ON THE PLANET - CLOSER VIEW 256

As thousands of small rocketships lift away from the surface, heading in a stream out of the solar system...

257 THE ASTEROID IMPACTS 257

And a wall of fire and debris scours the planet. Oceans boil and vaporize. Two gigantic hunks are blasted out of the planet, spinning in flames...

258 MCCONNELL, LUKE, AND TERRI 258

Involuntarily flinch, bathed in the fiery images...

259 THE PLANET IS NOW DEAD 259

As dust storms roil across its cold, lifeless surface. The flaming hunks of molten rock cool into twin moons.

260 THE ASTRONAUTS 260

Stare at this devastation, deeply moved.

261 IN DEEP SPACE 261

The stream of Martian ships grows smaller and smaller as it continues on its epic voyage towards a new solar system. Then we zero in on

ONE PARTICULAR ROCKETSHIP

As it peels off and goes in another direction. Graphics show a model of what the ship contains: the familiar double helix of DNA. The ship heads towards another blue planet in our solar system...

EARTH

As it was then. More clouds than now, more ocean, and the landforms all wedged together.

262 TERRI 262

Her voice is soft.

TERRI
Earth, when it was still Pangaea. Before the continents separated.

263 THE LONE MARTIAN SHIP 263

Makes a fiery streak through Earth's atmosphere and plunges into the ocean.

Instantly the image of the DNA double helix grows, filling the entire holographic column, then it begins to spin and pulse, disintegrating into a phantasmagoric whirl of new images...

264 MCCONNELL, LUKE, AND TERRI 264

Cry out, stunned by the strobelike power of the display as

265 LIVING FORMS 265

Flash into the holographic column, swimming, growing, crawling, leaping, flying: one-celled microscopic organisms, plankton, plants of all kinds, insects, then fish, dinosaurs, birds, small mammals, larger mammals - the entire stunning panorama of evolution, distilled into a single explosive sequence, as the images wash over the dazzled, awestruck

266 FACES OF THE ASTRONAUTS 266

Until finally the images whirl away, the holographic column dissolves, leaving only a circle of glowing, concentric, colored rings on the floor. The astronauts are left staring at each other across the open space where the column had been.

267 THE MARTIAN 267

Now comes forward with outstretched arms and completes their circle, taking the fourth position. McConnell is opposite her glowing form, and Terri and Luke are at either side. The Martian reaches her arms out, inviting them to link hands. As they do so, the Martian seems to be staring directly into McConnell's eyes.

MCCONNELL

Is in wondrous awe, his whole face radiant with joy. It's the first time we've ever seen him utterly without sadness or reserve. Staring at the Martian, he understands.

MCCONNELL
They're us. We're them...

LUKE
We're Martians...?

MCCONNELL
That's what she means.

TERRI
Oh my God. The Cambrian explosion.

McConnell and Luke look at her.

TERRI
Almost six hundred million years ago, there was a sudden expansion of life on Earth. The first multi-celled plants and animals appeared. No one has ever understood why...

(CONTINUED)

LUKE
They seeded Earth.

We hear a BELL-LIKE TONE, a single lingering high note, and simultaneously the outermost ring of the circle on the floor begins to glow brightly. It is an intense chromium yellow.

THE ASTRONAUTS

Step back, startled, unlinking their hands, and look at the circle of colored rings. These shade from yellow, on the outer rim, to a deeper yellow, then orange, then finally reds. Inside the final, deep red ring is a circle of indigo blue, about a meter across. Small points of light glitter here, like stars against a midnight sky.

THE MARTIAN

Steps closer to McConnell. She has picked him out in particular. Now she beckons for him to move inside the circle of colored rings, to stand on the indigo core.

MCCONNELL

Looks back at her, nods his understanding. For the first time she seems to smile. Benevolence, reassurance. Then as abruptly as she first appeared, she fades away. Vanishes.

Luke and Terri look at McConnell, confused. There is a sudden, static-filled CRACKLE from their helmets, nearby on the floor.

PHIL
(over radio)
...in, please. Can you... me?

Terri picks up her helmet, leans into its mike.

TERRI
Phil, we're here! We read you.

Even through the scratchy interference, they can hear the relief in Phil's voice. And then the desperation.

PHIL
Thank God! Listen, this storm is really -
(loud static)
- few more minutes, I can't -
(more static)
You've gotta get back to the ship!

And then they hear only STATIC. His signal is lost.

TERRI
Phil? Phil...?

Suddenly the BELL-LIKE TONE REPEATS, at a lower register, with a more sustained note, and simultaneously, the last of the yellow circles of light begins to fade, as

THE FIRST ORANGE BAND

Begins to glow brighter. McConnell turns, looking at this new color, then looks back at Luke and Terri.

MCCONNELL
We are in a ship. This is a ship. And the countdown has already started.

Terri looks at Luke, alarmed.

LUKE
He's right.

TERRI
Then let's get the hell out of here!

She scoops up Luke's helmet, tosses it to him. As he catches it, she's already starting back out, in the direction they came from, and Luke follows her. Until they both become aware that McConnell isn't with them. They turn back. He's still rooted to the spot, his gaze locked on the indigo core of the colored rings.

LUKE
Jim...

McConnell doesn't turn.

LUKE (CON'T)
Jim, we gotta go.

MCCONNELL
I'm not coming with you.

TERRI
(stunned)
What?

Coming back, she sees how calm he is. How certain.

TERRI (cont'd)
What are you talking about? We've got to get home.

MCCONNELL
That's where I'm going. Don't you see? That's what all this is for.
(McConnell gestures at the ship around them.)
You were right Terri. This is an invitation. To follow them. To follow them home.

He looks into their faces. Terri is trying to grasp this idea, still incredulous. Luke has the beginning of a half smile.

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
I have to go. This is the mission now. To find out who we are. Isn't that why we came here? Like Maggie said, "To stand on a new world and look beyond it to the next one."

Luke nods at the memory of Maggie's words. Terri remembers too. McConnell's passionate conviction is affecting them both.

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
You know, when you think about it - I wasn't even supposed to be here - all the accidents, everything that got us to this point, it's just...it's just...I just know it's right.

Terri looks at Luke. Luke is smiling. He understands.

MCCONNELL (cont'd)
I'm okay. I know what I'm doing. But you're running out of time. You've gotta get back to the ERV and get off this planet. Now please go.

Luke steps closer, looking at his old friend.

LUKE
I once felt like I was taking your turn. But now I think maybe you're taking mine. Guess I'm a little jealous.

They clasp hands for a moment. But in this moment is a lifetime of camaraderie, an eternity of farewell.

LUKE
Thanks for saving my life.

MCCONNELL
My pleasure.

Luke nods, deeply moved. He turns away, picking up his helmet, as Terri comes closer, looking at McConnell, a long unspoken beat. Her eyes are glistening.

TERRI
I wish Woody were here to see this. He would've wanted to go too, Jim.

Terri smiles. She is starting on the road to recovery. She's going to be okay.

MCCONNELL
He's here, Terri. We wouldn't have made it without him.

Terri nods. She digs into one of her suit's pockets, pulls something out. She hands it to McConnell, and his fist closes around it.

TERRI
Take care, Jim.

McConnell smiles. Terri smiles back at him. Then she turns, picks up her helmet, and crosses to where Luke has paused, looking back.

LUKE
Hey, Jim...?

MCCONNELL
Yeah?

LUKE
Have a great ride.

MCCONNELL
Always do.

Luke and Terri exchange a final silent farewell with him, then hurry away, into the darkness.

MCCONNELL

Looks down at what Terri gave him.

IT'S WOODY'S NECK CHAIN

With the little Flash Gordon rocketship.

MCCONNELL

Grips this tightly as he looks up.

268 thru 269 OMITTED 268 thru 269

270 EXT. MARS. THE FACE. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. NIGHT. 270

The hangar-like hatch has reopened, and Luke and Terri, helmeted again, emerge from the Face. The leading edge of the dust storm is upon them. They can't see much more than a few meters.

(CONTINUED)

As they reach the rover, they hear, even in this chaos, that the deep pulsing tone of the Face has started again. They look at each other, uncertain what this means. But McConnell is now beyond their help. Luke keys his mike.

LUKE
Phil? Phil, do you read?
(to Terri)
He's not reading.

TERRI
I can barely read you. Let's get the hell out of here!

271 INT. ERV COCKPIT. NIGHT. 271

PHIL
Is anyone there? Can anyone read me?

Phil gets no response. He is shaking, almost crying. He hesitates, then starts hitting some keys.

CLOSE ON HIS COMPUTER DISPLAY

Which reads: "PRE-LAUNCH CHECKLIST."

272 INT. MARTIAN SPACESHIP. NIGHT. 272

McConnell has shed his backpack, with its unneeded oxygen tank. He steps cautiously onto the colored rings. Nothing seems to happen. Moving further, he takes his place on the indigo circle at their core. He looks at

THE GLOWING TAKE-OFF COUNTDOWN INDICATOR

As it dips from orange into red; the BELL TONES are continuous now, very deep and rapid.

273 EXT. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. NIGHT. 273

The rover, with Luke and Terri inside, races away towards the safety of the ERV, as the maelstrom boils over the Face behind them. The sky is purplish black, thick with flying debris and eerie lightning flashes. Towering billows of dust chase them over the plain, nearly enveloping them as they speed towards us, passing OUT OF FRAME.

274 INT. MARTIAN SPACESHIP. NIGHT. 274

McConnell reacts, surprised, as suddenly

A TRANSPARENT, GLASS-LIKE CYLINDER

Begins to rise around him, swiftly and smoothly, coming up from the circumference of the indigo circle.

Then a second, identical cylinder - the top half - drops down from somewhere overhead. The two sections meet and fuse in a flash of light, containing McConnell inside them, as neatly as if he were in a giant, transparent mailing tube.

MCCONNELL

Fights against a stab of claustrophobia. Is he being imprisoned? Or somehow protected? Either way, he's virtually immobilized. In this tight space in his bulky suit, he can't even move his arms. Only his head and neck can still shift.

275 INT. ERV COCKPIT. NIGHT. 275

Phil is going over his final pre-launch checklist, flipping switches and pressing buttons. He looks at his

DIGITAL CLOCK

Which reads "1350."

PHIL IS STRICKEN, TORMENTED

His finger hovers over a "Fire" button. He licks his lips nervously, squeezes his eyes shut, and hits the button.

CLOSE ON COMPUTER DISPLAY

And the words: "IGNITION SEQUENCE INITIATED"

276 INT. MARTIAN SPACESHIP. NIGHT. 276

McConnell is straining inside the cylinder that surrounds him, when something catches his attention. He arches his neck, looking down.

A COBALT-BLUE TRANSPARENT LIQUID

Is beginning to fill the cylinder! It swirls in, from some unknown source, rising rapidly; already his lower boots are covered.

McConnell's EYES

Widen in alarm. He strains against the sides of the cylinder but

HIS GLOVED HANDS

Slide helplessly across the smooth surface.

MCCONNELL

Looks down again.

THE COBALT LIQUID

Is up to his knees. Now his thighs...

MCCONNELL

Cranes his neck, staring up. Can he wedge himself higher, can he somehow climb to safety?

277 ABOVE HIM 277

The entire "ceiling" of the Face is becoming translucent. He can see the dust storm, boiling overhead. And now, rising into this, are fiery coils of energy from the Face itself. These swirl and twist in every direction, like angry water snakes; battered by the fierce winds. Two vast forces on a collision course.

A278 INT. ROVER. NIGHT. A278

Luke drives the rover through the blinding storm, as Terri stares at a dashboard computer screen. They have to shout to be heard over the ROARING WIND.

TERRI
I've lost the Base Camp beacon!

Luke looks over alarmed.

CLOSE ON A DIAL

As the needle spins freely, giving no direction whatsoever.

TERRI
No good! We're driving blind.

LUKE
I'll try to keep on a straight line! It's our only chance.

TERRI
Don't worry! I've worked with Phil for four years! I know Jim gave him a direct order, but he won't leave without us.

B278 EXT. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. NIGHT. B278

The Rover races towards us, the front of the storm chasing it from behind, then completely overtaking the Rover. It disappears from view!

C278 INT. ERV COCKPIT. NIGHT. C278

Phil sits in the pilot's seat. He is looking at a computer graphic that shows the engines readying to launch. With resignation, he keys his mike.

PHIL
This is ERV, do you read? ERV to Rover, do you read...?

Phil waits a second, then reaches slowly for a blinking red switch that reads "LAUNCH." He hesitates, then actually has his fingers on it, about to flip it, when he hears a crackle of static on the radio. Phil keys his mike.

PHIL (cont'd)
This is ERV, do you read?

LUKE
(very faint)
Save the fuel, Phil. We're coming in.

And Phil chokes back a sob. Blinking back the tears, he tries to compose himself, then keys his mike.

PHIL
Uh, Phil's not here right now. He left for Earth five minutes ago. Please leave your message at the beep.

278 EXT. THE FACE. NIGHT. 278

FROM GROUND LEVEL we see that the coils of energy are rising from the forehead of the Face, from its "third eye," spinning and looping faster and faster, starting to form a vortex. But unlike the wind vortex that killed the Mars One crew, this is a vortex of fire. As we watch, more fiery streaks begin to emerge from the sides of the Face, from the chin, cheeks and temples. These all rush upwards, like lava flowing uphill, gathering in intensity as they leap free of the Face itself and spiral into the atmosphere. The peak of the forming vortex is already piercing the lowest layer of storm clouds, causing a dark counter-swirl.

279 EXT. MARS ONE BASE CAMP. NIGHT. 279 *

Phil stands at the bottom of the ERV's ladder, gripping it to steady himself, staring into the swirling dust. *

THE ROVER appears out of the dust and sand, the immense storm seeming to chase it from behind. Luke and Terri climb out, struggle towards him through the wind. Phil grips their hands, helping them over to the ladder. He looks back, confused. *

PHIL *
Where's Jim? *

TERRI *
He got another ride. *

Phil stares at her, bewildered. *

LUKE *
Tell you on the way. Let's go! *

280 thru 285 OMITTED 280 thru 285

286 INT. MARTIAN SHIP. NIGHT. 286

LOOKING DOWN INTO THE CYLINDER, we see that the cobalt-blue fluid has risen to McConnell's upper chest. Now it's at his shoulders! It pours into his suit through his neck ring.

He strains on tiptoes, craning his head back, trying to keep his unhelmeted face above the rising liquid. *

He sucks in deep desperate gulps of air, his head thrashing from side to side. Then suddenly the fluid is over his mouth, his nose, his forehead. His whole body is submerged!

(CONTINUED)

286 CONTINUED:

The level of fluid continues to rise towards the unseen top of the cylinder.

MCCONNELL

Squeezes his eyes shut, holding his breath. Not so much fighting this anymore as simply floating in place, waiting for his inevitable death...

287 EXT. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. NIGHT. 287

WIDEVIEW FROM ABOVE, as the energy vortex bends from side to side, pushing back the swirling storm that surrounds the Face. As the vortex coalesces its energy into a cylindrical shape, we see through its center to a rising form -- the Martian ship. It is a flattened convex circle whose matte-metallic angles replicate the "Face" imagery.

A288 EXT. PLAINS OF CYDONIA.NIGHT.SIDEVIEW FROM INSIDE THE FACE A288

As the Face burns away around us, the Martian ship <u>begins to rise and spin</u>.

B288 OMITTED B288

C288 EXT. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. NIGHT. C288

The vortex is now a tight, rapidly spinning cylinder. As it draws more and more power from the disintegrating Face, the Martian ship in its center spins <u>faster and faster</u>.

288 INT. MARTIAN SHIP. NIGHT. 288

MCCONNELL'S FACE

Is spinning and shaking too, more and more violently, as the huge buildup of G-forces tears at his body. We're reminded of Nick Willis just before the vortex exploded him; is the same thing about to happen to McConnell?

His eyes remain tightly shut, bubbles are streaming from his lips. His last breath is nearly exhausted, it's being shaken from his lungs.

289
thru OMITTED
293

289 *
thru *
293

294 INT. MARTIAN SPACESHIP. NIGHT. 294

As we MOVE IN CLOSER ON HIS FACE, we suddenly see, with him, a SERIES of rapid-fire, almost subliminal IMAGES FROM THE PAST. We recognize each one. Previously, though, we saw them as still photos; now they have movement, life, and we view them from new and slightly different angles. These images INTERCUT with glimpses of McConnell's pale, shaking, near-death face in the present...

295 OMITTED 295

296 THE YOUNG MCCONNELL 296

Under the Christmas tree, lifts his new model rocket from its box. He turns to us, smiling joyfully. A blinding white flash, and he disappears...

297 OMITTED 297

298 THE TEENAGED MAGGIE 298

Is on her porch, under a night sky, bending down to the eyepiece of a TELESCOPE. She looks up at us with a shy, proud smile. A blinding white flash and she's gone...

299 OMITTED 299

300 MAGGIE AND MCCONNELL 300

In flight suits, holding their helmets, stand on the wing of a fighter jet. The radiant young couple turn to each other, kissing. A blinding white flash and they vanish...

301 MAGGIE MCCONNELL 301

In an astronaut's pressure suit, drifts rapidly towards us, reeling in along a tether. A man's gloved hand is outstretched, reaching for her. As she grips the hand, we see her triumphant expression through her faceplate. A blinding flash; she's gone...

302 MCCONNELL'S FACE - IN THE PRESENT 302 *

Is shaking savagely; he is very near death. And then, all at once, the SHAKING STOPS. *

Time itself seems to stop. *

McConnell opens his eyes, staring STRAIGHT AT US. And then, fully accepting his fate, he throws his head back, opens his mouth and takes in a deep lungful of the fluid. He can breathe it. *

(CONTINUED)

His eyes widen in surprise and understanding. He can breathe it! This fluid will keep him alive! His whole body relaxes, the tension draining from his head and shoulders, as he fully trusts this launch for the first time. And then, with his eyes wide open, he sees, from memory, one final image...

303 A BRIDAL VEIL IS LIFTED 303

And REVEALS, in CLOSEUP, the beautiful face, the shining eyes of MAGGIE McCONNELL. Beatific, eternal. She gazes directly INTO CAMERA, then smiles...

304 MCCONNELL 304

Smiles back.

305 EXT. PLAINS OF CYDONIA. NIGHT. 305

WIDE VIEW, FROM ABOVE, as the energy vortex changes from red-orange to blue-white. It ROARS with terrifying power as its top starts to bend, angling like a telescope towards a specific point in the stars. Then the Martian ship - a rounded darker form, little more than a blip within the vast, blue-white column of energy - shoots away from the surface, leaving only a blacked crater where the Face had been.

306 EXT. MARS. HIGH ATMOSPHERE. NIGHT. 306

ANGLE FROM DEEP SPACE, LOOKING DOWN, as the Martian ship, riding its blue-white column of energy, streaks up into the vast blackness, like a narrowly focussed spotlight piercing the night. Down below, we can see the dust storm in all its vastness still boiling orange and brown across the planet's surface, which it now completely covers.

As the Martian ship flashes by us, it passes another ship, much smaller and slower, rising through the storm clouds on a different trajectory. We recognize the familiar, comfortable sight of the ERV.

PUSHING IN QUICKLY ON THIS,

We see three figures in the cockpit.

307 OMITTED 307

308 INT. ERV COCKPIT. NIGHT. 308

Luke, Terri and Phil are strapped in, with their acceleration just starting to level off, when suddenly their cockpit interior is starkly bathed in white light. They wince at the unearthly radiance, shielding their faceplates with gloved hands.

(CONTINUED)

TERRI
Dear God. Look at that.

Through their cockpit window, they watch the Martian ship hurtle by them at a hundred times their speed.

PHIL
Is that him?

Luke nods. Their eyes are glistening. Luke's voice is a whisper, both of prayer and farewell.

LUKE
Godspeed Jim McConnell.

309 OMITTED

310 OMITTED 310 *

311 EXT. SPACE. 311 *

Looking through the cockpit window we see the Martian ship receding into the infinite distance of space - a long blue-white scratch that in moments begins to fade. Finally it is a tiny point of light, taking its place amongst the limitless expanse of the star-filled heavens. * * * * * *

*

THE END.

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